

Basque E. 33



**ZAHAROFF
FUND**



THE
BASQUE PROVINCES:

THEIR
POLITICAL STATE, SCENERY, AND INHABITANTS;

WITH
ADVENTURES
AMONGST THE CARLISTS AND CHRISTINOS.

BY
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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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THE
BASQUE PROVINCES.

CHAPTER I.

THE Christino operations for the relief of Bilbao now came within the view of the besiegers, and rendered the contest doubly interesting. On Saturday the 25th November, we could perceive from the Banderas, that two companies from Portugalete had entered the convent of San Nicolás del Desierto, that its telegraph was actively at work, and that a bridge of boats and *trincaduras* was in progress on the south, over the estuary (the Ria Galinda) which separates it from the village of Baracaldo. This was completed the next morning, and the road was thereby opened for the Christinos to the next estuary, the Ria Salcedon.

While these preparations were going on, the Carlists set fire to their late acquisition, the empty convent of Burseña on the northern bank of the last-mentioned Ria, and partially broke down the suspension bridge which connected it with the southern bank, so that their guerillas might pass over by clinging to the chains, which were allowed to remain at one side, but which hostile feet dare not attempt, in whatever force they might arrive. (*Vide Appendix.*)

On Sunday morning the 26th November, at day-break, a column of 12,000 Christinos, led by Espartero, Oraa, and the Baron de Meer, marched out of Portugalete; and, ere the last had left it, extended along the river to the convent of San. Nicolás. Crossing the promontory of Desierto, they passed over the bridge of boats, and the heights above Baracaldo; while the Carlist guns at Banderas, Monte de Cabras, and the Baya Saroza, kept up a brisk fire at them across the Ria Nervion. They marched right to the convent, extinguished the flames, and attempted to take possession of the bridge, in hopes to render it passable; but the Carlists had arranged every thing their own way, and they were a day too late. However, they planted a couple of field pieces, and endeavoured to drive away from the bridge-house, the guerillas who defended the chains and tottering planks, but without effect. They then marched further inland,

along the Ria Salcedon, trying to cross by fording at Quadra; but, beaten back every where, they marched on to the bridge of Castrejana (a single stone arch, in a deep valley under the church of St. Agatha), over which Espartero had vainly attempted to force his way, to raise the first siege of Bilbao in the time of Zumalacarregui. He knew the ground very well, and drove in Castor's guerillas like a man determined to have his own way this time. His lancers at first actually galloped at them; but they were soon glad to allow their own guerillas to take the precedence. About two o'clock in the afternoon, a grand rush was made to force the bridge: (the Carlists say that the Christinos always attack in the afternoon, that the approaching night may cover their retreat). Here Don Castor Andechaga made a stand and combined his forces with Sopelana, when a serious contest took place. The Carlist battalion of Guipuscoa reserved its fire till the Christinos came close down to the bridge; then poured a volley that sounded like a broadside, and made them halt and stagger. The Carlists were very steady, although both divisions concentrated here under the command of the General-in-chief, Villarreal, amounted only to 3,000 men (out of the 6,500 at his disposal) with two field pieces. The affair was soon decided by the battalion of Guipuscoa rushing over the arch and driving the

assailants up the heights again, where they encamped for the night, at a distance of above two miles from the bridge, having lost ten prisoners, thirteen mules laden with ammunition, and the carriages of their two field pieces. They either buried the guns somewhere during the night on their retreat, or carried them off on the backs of their baggage mules. The loss of the Christinos in this attempt, according to their admission to their English friends at Portugalete, was 300 in killed and wounded. Amongst the latter was General Castañeda, severely. The Carlist loss in wounded was twenty-seven officers, amongst them Captain Vial, of the Alavese (brother of the officer wounded before the gate of San Agustin), and eighty-two privates (forty seriously), but I believe none were killed. (*Vide Appendix.*)

Villarreal and his staff were everywhere—on the bridge, in the fire, and (quite as dangerous) in the previous reconnoitering parties, within pistol-shot of the Christinos, when I expected the latter would have made a dash, and either have killed or taken them all! But everything seems to go by contraries in Christino and Carlist warfare. An assailing force of 12,000 of the former, lose all courage after the first check of the guerillas of 3000 of the latter. As to the Carlist besiegers, they ought (according to the best tacticians) to have been

quite out of spirits, and ready to raise the siege at finding themselves placed between two fires thundering at each end of the valley of Duesto; while the garrison ought to have made a sortie, &c. Nothing of the kind! The garrison merely endeavoured to hold their own, blazing away inside the walls, while the Carlists' courage increased with the dangers of their position. While Villarreal was beating Espartero up the hill at St. Agatha, Eguia was assaulting the convent of San. Agustin, for the fifth time I believe. He had given the blockade of the convent to three companies of Arragonese, commanded by Captain Don Francisco Garcia, and had assured them that he would allow them to take it all by themselves without any Biscayan help. Being in high spirits, particularly flattered by the compliment, and cheered on by Don Juan de Bessieres of the Engineers, who had volunteered for the assault of the convent, they dashed at it at noon-day, and took it by surprise. The garrison made a desperate resistance; retiring from one apartment to another, defending each as long as they could, then escaping as they might, and finally making a stand in the church where a serious contest took place. None of the officers or old soldiers asked or expected quarter; and when the Carlists found themselves inside, only seventy-five were there alive to surrender at discretion.—

These were all boys, little removed from mere children, whose singular and pitiable appearance made the assailants pause and spare, the instant they laid down their arms. They stripped them, however, of course, and struggled their brawny shoulders into the superfine jackets of the boys ;—then dashed on again, and took two strong houses in the adjoining street, the Calle de Sendeca. 71 of the prisoners were of the regiment of Compostella, and 4 of that of Truxillo ;—the last remaining of those two fine regiments. (*Vide Appendix.*)

It appeared, that many of the Christino soldiers who were on guard there, had left their posts, and ascended to the belfry or to the hill fort within the gates, to obtain a sight of the distant combat. The Arragonese upon the watch, adroitly slipped into the convent, and took possession of it ; its garrison, on their return, were repulsed, and fled towards the town. They were met by the astonished Urbanos,—the alarm was given, and every exertion was made to dispossess the captors. A large body of the Urbanos appeared, each carrying a straw mattress,—rushed into the church,—set fire to them under the wood work, and in a few minutes the whole interior of the magnificent building was in flames ; the beautiful carved work, and every other combustible material, was consumed, and nothing remained but the massive walls filled with

dense smoke. This drove out the Arragonese, but they soon returned in force, before the Urbanos could be strengthened, and a desperate struggle took place upon the burning embers. Two officers of the Urbanos, Don Candido Pedronena, and the other Don — Gaminda, were killed, besides twenty-six of the privates. The garrison immediately turned their fire on the convent, and threw shell after shell, till they set it also on fire. The news flew like lightning to the Carlists at the bridge of Castrejana. They soon told it to the Christinos, and were henceforth all-conquering.

The next morning at daylight (Monday 27th), Castor, who had slept on the Christino side of the bridge, followed up his work of driving back Espartero and his forces; and while the Carlist guerrillas were gradually advancing, a steamer from Portugalete came dashing up the river, towing fifteen launches, and a *trincadura*;—cast anchor at the quay under fort Desierto, and there loosed off the boats, which were speedily rowed round the point into the Ria Galinda, and up to the pontoon bridge. There they received the wounded of the previous day's combat, and returned without delay to Portugalete. At this period Villarreal descended the hill above Burseña at the head of five battalions, forded the Ria Salcedon, and ascended the hill in the face of Espartero's retiring battalions.

These poured in a heavy fire which, strange to say, did not kill or wound any one. Villarreal and his staff rode in the very front all the time.

The Christinos now retreated hastily, but in good order, in two columns, by the same roads they came; burning all the houses in Baracaldo and Sestao, beside several *casarios*, in the most reckless and evidently despairing style of evacuation. This part of the country had not up to that moment been in the hands of the Carlists; but the Christinos were destroying all within their reach, as if they never hoped to repossess themselves of it. The Carlist army were furious at this atrocity; and it was feared that such a return for all their clemency would have a lamentable result for the Urbanos of Bilbao, or any Christinos taken prisoners in future conflicts. The Carlists had hitherto displayed extraordinary forbearance. All the prisoners taken by assault or otherwise, around Bilbao, during the siege, whether in the Banderas, los Capuchinos, San Mamès, Burseña, Sna. Agustin, or at the bridge of Castrejana,—had been spared; and in return, Espartero set the dwelling-houses of their friends and kindred in flames! But all, from the General to the private, were now dreadfully indignant, and threatened correspondingly¹. At night

¹ The intelligent correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* at Portugalete writes, on November 30 :—" Before recrossing the

Villarreal held all the positions at the Bilbao side of Desierto. The Infante Don Sebastian witnessed all the operations of both days, from the captured fort of the Banderas. (*Vide Appendix.*)

Believing the town must submit after this double victory, Eguia sent a *parlementario* to summon it;—to spare, if possible, the horrors of an assault. (*Vide Appendix.*) Don Luis Peseto, (the adjutant of General Sylvestre, who distinguished himself so much at the taking of San Mamés,)—delivered the message at the gates of San Agustín, and was informed that on the morrow an answer would be sent by General San Miguel. While in this dangerous vicinity, (for the garrison were firing shot and shells on the church and captured convent all day,) he was wounded by a shot; but it was believed accidentally. Another more serious accident took place in the battery of Uribarri that day: a caisson blew up, and wounded Colonel Benito Urrutia, a cadet, and nine men.

bridge of boats over the Galinda River, on the evening of the 27th, the Queen's troops set fire to the extensive village of Baracaldo; this was not done by order of General Espartero, but by individuals of the army, exasperated at finding the place deserted by the inhabitants, as was the case in every village and hamlet on the approach of the Queen's army. The very reverse occurs when the factious bands appear;—not only do the people remain in their houses, but the rebels are supplied with provisions and comforts, while the Christinos meet with nothing but bare walls."

San Miguel never sent his promised reply ; having, meantime, received an assurance from Captain Lapidge's ever-consolatory telegraph (as we subsequently learned), that Espartero would immediately make another effort for his relief.

CHAPTER II.

It may naturally be supposed that the proceedings of the British vessels of force in the river Nervion were a subject of much speculation and anxiety, both to the Carlist army and the few Englishmen who happened to be present at the siege. It may appear extraordinary now, but it is nevertheless certain, that the besiegers were willing to believe that the British flag would not be lightly endangered or committed in a mountain contest, and to hope that if they abstained from insult and injury, their forbearance would be appreciated and their hostility not be wantonly provoked. The extent of both will be best understood by the perusal of an extract from the admirable description of the peculiar circumstances of the case by a correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* in a letter dated "Portugalete, November 11." The writer took an active

part in the operations for the relief of Bilbao, and was rewarded by the cross of San Fernando.

“The position of his Majesty’s vessels here, as well as that of the senior British officer commanding in the river, is peculiar, and I may say, critical. The space between the bar of Portugalete and the fortified post of the Desierto, may literally be called a trap. It is impossible to get out of it under certain circumstances, which occur five weeks out of six at this season of the year. For instance, *when the bar is up*, as it is called in nautical language, it is impossible for a vessel or a boat to go out; and beyond the Desierto, nothing can proceed up the river under existing circumstances. His Majesty’s brigs *Ringdove* and *Saracen* are at this moment within the above-described trap, the sides of which yawn with cannon-mouths ready to send forth destructive thunder. The spring tides are over, and in forty-eight hours the mouth of the trap will be completely closed. Nothing else remains, therefore, than to fight right and left against batteries erected or erecting on each side of them. It is by no means improbable that with these advantages the Carlists may seriously injure, or perhaps disable, his Majesty’s vessels, without any other good result being obtained than a proof—perhaps a very severe one—of the bravery and devotedness of our naval officers.”

Feeling no little anxiety on the same subject myself, I (shortly after the capture of Burseña) rode with a friend around Monte de Cabras, and the causeway of Luchana, to learn the whereabouts of his Majesty's brigs *Saracen* and *Ringdove*, and ascertain "if their intentions were honourable" in their approach to the mountains. We found them lying to, among the restless Trincaduras, above and below Fort Desierto, apparently asleep—with only the old true blue cockade fluttering at the mast-head. The Carlists seemed asleep also,—in the confidence that John Bull would show fair play and have the candour to send his compliments up the hills in a broadside, if he intended to interfere again on shore in the family quarrel; meanwhile strict orders had been given by General Eguia not to fire on the British vessels on any account. We stopped at the door of the old auberge in the causeway to take a *longue vue* of the fort, and saw the Christino artilleros busy with the thirty-two pounders. The hostess popped her head out of the window above, and hearing our observations, got into the fidgets. "*Ellos tiran de tiempo in tiempo, Señores!*" said she impatiently. "They fire every minute from the fort at whatever appears on the hills or the causeway, and they keep one gun levelled to sweep the spot before my door just where you stand; and oh, if they miss you, they'll knock my house down!

Santa Maria! Quita!" We cantered off for the good of the house, and the shot came hopping after us just two seconds too late.

On arriving at Bayonne eight weeks afterwards, I learned to my great surprise that while his Majesty's brigs *Saracen* and *Ringdove* lay inoffensively in the river, apparently confiding in the well-known friendly disposition of the Carlists above, (who could easily have sunk them if they pleased,) the English crews were actually at work in Desierto, cannonading the *facciosos*! Such was old England's fair play in Spanish affairs,—according to the non-intervention policy uppermost in Downing Street! Fair play! non intervention! The words are astonished to find themselves in the same sentence. "God preserve us from our friends!" say the astonished Carlists: "we are able to deal with our enemies ourselves. Had we expected the English navy to take part against us on the heights of Monte de Cabras, we should have been better prepared, and not left the road open to them, as we did on Christmas Eve, to induce Espartero and his fellows to come and be beaten. *Otros días, otras circunstancias!*"

I had intended to state in detail the several facts connected with this singular proceeding, but as I find them already in print in a very interesting letter from Lord Ranelagh to Lord

John Hay, I beg leave to refer the reader to it as an authentic and highly instructive statement. (*Vide Appendix A.*) His Lordship takes such a clear, right English view of the case, that I can add nothing to its forcible illustration of the very extraordinary policy pursued in the disposition of H. B. M.'s Naval forces.

As however, the besiegers were in a great degree of uncertainty respecting the intentions of their enemies, and as it was not at all improbable that the river would be made the grand line of operations for the relief of Bilbao, every care was taken by Eguia to accumulate obstacles in the path either of their steam-boats or *trincaduras*. Parapets were thrown up at Lexona where he intended to bring some guns to bear on Portugaleta and Desierto, but the heavy metal of the latter fort soon levelled them, and this plan was given up. During the severe weather the floating-bridge which stretched across from Olaveaga to the convent of San. Mamès, was thrice broken up: the last time by the shock of boats which the garrison floated down against it, with the aid of the rapid ebb which prevails in this Ria. On that occasion the General himself rode to the spot, and not only issued orders for its reconstruction with hawsers and moorings that gave fair promise of not letting it loose in haste again, but stood by, and saw it done. He also set General Sylvestre to prepare a sunken bar of boats full of stones

across the Ria farther up towards the town, just opposite the church of Deusto; but the mountain floods, high tides and low ebbs disarranged the latter job;—the boats would not stay where they were placed; so General Sylvestre set to work driving a double row of piles diagonally across the river, in a ford near the same spot, to present a more steady array of impediments. Don Sebastian now resided in Olaveaga, and although he did not take any active part either against the town or the army approaching to relieve it, evinced great interest in the operations. He frequently visited the hospitals, inspected the accommodations and endeavoured to cheer the spirits of the sufferers;—attending the masses celebrated in their presence, and providing for their comfort by disbursements from his private purse. On the 21st November, I remember, he gave every wounded private a dollar, and every officer in the hospitals, six. These acts of kind and considerate attention produced the best effect; and severe as were the privations of the poor fellows who formed the mass of the army, I never heard a murmur amongst them; excepting indeed from Messieurs and Mynheers the Algerines, who had always some grievance to complain of,—above all, that their bravery was not appreciated:—so their chief consolation lay in celebrating their own valorous acts for the edification of all who would listen. Indeed I must do them the justice

to say, that if their other virtues had equalled their courage, they would have been worthy of the highest military honours that Don Carlos could bestow. They were foremost in almost every affair of danger, and had more officers and men killed and wounded amongst them, than any other corps of double their numbers engaged in the siege. But truth must be told: they were very fond of *vino-tinto*, *vino-blanco*, *chacoli*, *aguardiente*, &c., very fond of a quarrel afterwards, and gave their officers exceeding trouble to manage them. Some of these French officers were the finest looking men, and the most thorough-going soldiers I ever beheld.

On the 28th we received intelligence that Ituralde, his wife and daughter, with a Lieutenant-Colonel and five other officers had been surprized and taken prisoners at Araya, six leagues from Vitoria, by a noted Christino partizan, smuggler and thief, named Martin de Barea. This news caused a great sensation in the camp, as it was said that a second surprize could not have occurred accidentally, Ituralde having on the 18th of August previous lost 400 men between Sesma and Lodosa by a similar want of precaution. His wife was permitted shortly afterwards to come to the camp before Bilbao to endeavour to settle his affairs. She remained there some days, after which the

minister prudently directed her to reside at Aspeytia till the termination of the siege.

No answer arriving from San Miguel, the Carlists resolved to make the most of their time, and try if any impression could be made upon the old town at the west, where the low grounds of Albia stretched along the left bank of the river towards San. Mamès;—accordingly on the 29th of November, Eguia brought a couple of guns to bear on the garden wall of the fortified convent of Santa Clara de la Concepcion, outside the town, to the north, and made a trifling breach towards evening; but the garrison within kept up such a continuous fire on the spot, that all who attempted to enter were repulsed on the instant. The guns of the town were also directed against the assailants, and seriously interfered with their operations. Four Carlists were killed, and about a dozen wounded in this affair. The convent was a good position, and worth taking, as it would have opened Bilbao Veijo to the besiegers. Their battery was again at work the next day, but nothing effective was accomplished against Santa Clara; for thenceforward the operations of Espartero became so important, that every hand and gun which could be spared from the blockade was arrayed on the hills overlooking the approaches from Portugalete.

The bridge of boats which had been laid on the morning of the 27th of November, to enable Espartero to cross the Ria Galinda from Fort Desierto to Burseña, was withdrawn on Monday night, soon after the last of his two columns had recrossed it; and nothing was heard or seen of them on Tuesday till dusk, when it was perceived from the heights, that they were constructing another bridge of boats across the very mouth of the Ria Nervion, leading from Portugalete to the right or eastern bank. This bridge contained thirty-two gun boats, brigs and larger vessels. Soon after day-break the next morning (the 30th) a mass of troops, cavalry, infantry and artillery were seen to pass over it, and form on the sands before the Consulate House. It is believed that 12,000 men marched over this bridge that day, and it was known that Espartero expected 4,000 more from Valmaceda before he committed himself in the attempt to force the Carlist lines. These not arriving, he was obliged to attempt something with "the few he had."

The position held by the Carlist army on the heights of San Domingo and Archanda was magnificent, considered as the stronghold of a besieging army. On one side they could pounce upon Bilbao and on the Ria by which any supplies could reach it from the sea. On the other (to the east)

they could maintain their ground against any army of treble their amount, by the natural strength of their position—a range of steep sand-stone mountains, covered half way up with forests of oak, seamed with numerous ravines, scooped into quarries, and intersected by mule-paths, bad enough at the best, but which in winter (with a little engineering) would each become lines of ditches or redoubts, so deep, angular and rutty are they. Then, below all, runs the grand debatable line, the *Ria de Asua*, from the broken bridge of Luchana up to the barricaded bridge of Derio in the valley, on the high road from Bilboa to Munguia; a distance of between six and seven miles. The bridge of Asua was also broken down—and no place between it and Luchana was fordable in the face of an enemy.

On these heights, and as guerillas in valleys and forests, were stationed fourteen battalions and sixteen pieces of artillery, ready to meet *Espartero* on any point he might endeavour to ascend; four more battalions of Biscayans under Major-General Sylvestre of the Engineers, with the remaining artillery watched Bilbao; while three battalions (the 2nd of Biscay, the 3rd of Castile, and the 2nd of Castile), with two squadrons of cavalry, returned from the Asturias under the command of Major-General Pablo Sanz, rested on

the hills over Saroza, guarding the western sides of the Ria Nervion and the important bridge of Castrejana. These battalions varied in number from 500 to 800 each. The dispositions were as follow, commencing with Montede Cabras, the most western point on the right of the river. At the debouchment of the Ria, a four-pounder was placed, commanding the bridge of Luchana and the bend of the Nervion towards Portugalete; below it, on the narrow road under the precipice, were a large twenty-four pounder and an eight-pound field piece awaiting any steamer or trincadura; on the heights to the east, were two eight-pounders and one three-pounder. The former exchanged shots with the Convent of Desierto; the latter annoyed Espartero's masses when they ascended the high table land of Ondis. The most northern corner of the Carlist positions was Monte Areagas, where one eight-pounder and one four-pounder were planted to prevent the occupation of the opposite heights and houses above Erandio. Next (following the course of the Ria, eastward) were the heights of Asua, where two four-pounders, a small mortar and a howitzer, both of seven pulgados, were planted for the defence of the village below. Again, on the height of *Molino à viento* (the wind-mill) was a thirty-six pounder, and at various points on the *Camino Real* (the high road) to

Munguia, was the great mortar of fourteen pulgados and two cannons, sixteen and eighteen pounders. The officers in command under Villarreal on the mountains were Brigadiers Garcia, Zaratiegui, Sarasa and Sopelana, with Colonels Neboà and Nogueruela (Sopelana commanded the reserve of three battalions of Alavese). The southern bank of the Ria Asua, adjoining the village of that name, was the only point of this long line on which the Carlists threw up any parapets for musketry, (with the exception of the narrow road on the bank of the Ria Nervion, where a bank was thrown across it under the precipice of Monte de Cabras.) There they mended some ditches and pierced a few field walls with loopholes, and there Colonel Casimir Ilserbe, with six companies of the sixth battalion of Biscay, were stationed as the advanced post to offer the first steady resistance, when the guerillas in Erandio and Lexona should be obliged to retire before the column.

On the evening of the 30th the Christino guerillas, which began to ascend the valley, or rather the lowest hills (for the ground falls inland from the bold shore above the sands), were promptly checked by four companies of Biscayan sharpshooters of the sixth battalion stationed at Lexona, and the result was that Espartero thought it pru-

dent to remain in Algorta that night. The garrison of Bilbao, who of course were made aware of the movement, and also heard the firing, probably thought that Eguia would be sufficiently occupied in defending his lines at Asua,—took heart, and made a sortie during the night (at two o'clock A.M., the 1st of December), for the recovery of their grand out-work, the convent of San Agustin within which the besiegers were preparing an extensive mine and new batteries for the demolition of their last defences, the wall of the town at the opposite side of the street. They issued from the gate of la Cujes and assaulted the convent, but finding its defenders on the alert and in force sufficient to punish their audacity, precipitately retired. Amongst the wounded in this affair were the Christino Generals San Miguel and Arraaz. Thus repulsed and disappointed in what naturally must have appeared to them the most favourable moment to make an impression on their assailants, they relinquished all hopes of prolonging their resistance by their own resources; and a deserter from the town assured us that if Espartero had not telegraphed his intention of making a second strong effort for their relief, they would at once have embraced Eguia's merciful proposition, and hastened to enter into terms, to save the city from the horrors of the anticipated assault.

At daybreak on the morning of the 1st of December, the Christinos were seen from the Banderas moving in masses inland; and ere the last had quitted Algorta, a dense column of smoke, tinged with the flame of the roof tree, rose from the houses where the ruffian incendiaries had slept. The first was that of the village *Cura*. This is the way in which the Christinos repay the rights of hospitality in their tours through the provinces. From what I saw of their infernal style of warfare while Espartero was before Bilbao, I was not surprised at the deep and settled hatred with which they were regarded by the peasantry, and the awful execrations which were poured out on their heads—the forerunners of vials of wrath, which deluge the earth with blood. But the folly of this species of “war to the cottage” is equal to its barbarity. The patriotic spirit of the Basque peasantry is the stronghold of Don Carlos. It is worth a treasury, a standing army, and a magazine to him. He has only to call on it for supplies, and it is granted with a readiness that realizes the fable of Fortunatus and the wishing cap. Every savage display of the common enemy replenishes his councils with new energy, his camp with new combatants, and his cause with new arguments and new successes. It is a process as natural as the progress of the seasons,—of seed-time, and of harvest—of crime, and of

retribution. The proud, hardy, vigorous peasant, turned out of house and home, proves a dangerous enemy in his own ravaged fields. The grandsire, tottering under the weight of years, infirmities, and the wreck of his homestead in search of a resting place, becomes a still more formidable foe by his influence amongst a simple, sensitive race who reverence age, abhor oppression, and

“With whom revenge is virtue.”

These are the feelings, roused into energetic action, that have made the Basque peasants conquerors in so many unequal contests. Looking at the result as a mere matter of tactics, I felt assured that both Oraa and Espartero must be the most stupid Generals in Europe, if their experience had not already convinced them that these heartless acts of domestic spoliation only nerved their opponents to a pitch of vengeful enthusiasm sufficient to ensure their defeat in the next battle.

To continue:—After the morning's conflagration, the incendiaries marched inland from the heights of Algorta and Lexona down the valley of Luchoa and Erandio, till they arrived at the latter village; occupying the road leading thence to Asua and the Ria which flows up into the valley, and keeping out of musket-shot of its defenders; however, the 6th battalion of Biscay, under Aguirre, annoyed

them considerably in the woods of Sondica. Their lancers remained about a mile in the rear of their columns. The vale of Asua is smooth and broad, and admirably adapted for the evolutions of cavalry. All the Christino movements were plainly seen from fort Banderas, where the Infante Don Sebastian and his suit were stationed that morning, (as St. Nicholas del Desierto seemed to guess, by the frequent grenades he sent thither). The two Generals Villarreal and Eguia with their respective staffs, took up their head-quarters together on an equally commanding eminence, a spur which stretches northward into the vale of Asua towards Sondica, from the long ridge of San Domingo and Monte Archanda, which separates it from the valley of Bilbao. It is distinguished by the remains of an ancient Ermitana dedicated to San Roque, burnt down in these unhappy wars. This hill affords a very extensive view of the scene of operations along the Ria Asua, and by a few minutes ride along its summit ridge, of the Ria Nervion and Bilbao also. The Carlist army bivouacked around, without any shelter from the December mists and showers into whose proper region they had penetrated on these heights, and which enveloped them twenty times in the course of the day; but the position was valuable, being strongly defended by nature against an ascending foe, and rendered still more formidable

by several guns, drawn up from the breaching batteries and planted on the brow above the forest. The columns remained on the roads around Erandio until dusk, and then dispersed for the night in the adjoining villages and farm houses.

Next day (the 2d of December) General Oraa appeared inclined to make a beginning, and after various movements for the distribution of his forces between Erandio and Sondica, threw forward sixty *tirailleurs* supported by a battalion, a squadron of cavalry and a string of baggage mules. The former took possession of a little hill to the east of Asua, and beat about for somebody "to fight withal," but none were to be seen, although the oak forests looked very suspicious. Presently, an eight-pounder on the spur of the hill of St. Roque, spoke out;—whereupon their cavalry was observed to wheel about and take up a safer position half-a-mile further off;—the battalion sought shelter under a hill, the baggages behind a ditch. The eight-pounder was now turned against the infantry and a small howitzer "lent its benevolent assistance," 'til the *tirailleurs*, battalion and *bagages* scampered back to Sondica. Another party, in similar apple-pie order, next crossed a few fields to look at the entrenchments and loop-holes of the village of Asua; but after receiving a few shots, they also hastened back to

Sondica, although the northern side of the Ria and all its houses (half the village) had been, from the first, intentionally abandoned to them. A third *reconnaissance* marched out into the open plain:—the *tirailleurs* deployed in the neatest order and commenced firing away “with zeal, promptitude, and assiduity” at the silent mountains half-a-mile off! I asked a dozen officers of experience, what the deuce those fellows were at? Nobody knew—and could only guess that it was something to keep them employed! These, after firing till they were tired, withdrew; when a fourth division again marched boldly behind the outer walls of Asua, on the undefended side, and again retired, amidst the laughter of the Carlist guerillas. A fifth, which seemed directed to force a passage over the Ria where it bends towards the mountains, and to take the village defenders in flank, promised something; but the Christinos contented themselves with getting a sight of their enemies, and firing at them *a la distancia*. The Carlists obligingly left their entrenchments and advanced to the banks of the Ria to meet them; but the Christino *tirailleurs* prudently kept a field betwixt them and the mountaineers. Thus the day was innocently passed. Towards evening, Oraa threatened the *Camino Real*, from Munguia, as if he wished to enter Bilbao by that easy route, but Eguia instantly moved thither

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with his artillery, blockaded the bridge of Derio, and finally slept by the road side, awaiting him; however not the slightest attempt was made to force the position.

On Saturday, the 3rd, the same amusing *reconocimientos* were repeated by General Oraa in the neighbourhood of the *Camino Real*, and with similar results. The whole thing was ludicrous in the extreme. I had no conception that the Christinos were such cowards. The greater number appeared to be well employed in washing and drying their shirts. On Sunday, they behaved a little better, occupying the Palacio and garden of the Marquis of Zamorosta, eastward of Asua, and thence keeping up a flank fire on the Carlists who defended the side of the Ria next the mountains. The *faccioso* Artillery overhead on the heights of Areagas, however, replied very effectively; while the Biscayan guerillas sheltered by a wood which advanced into the valley, peppered them so continuously, that at last they dared not show their faces beyond the garden walls. We could plainly see from the mountains their wounded supported back to Sondica; and when the approach of night put an end to the contest, each held their respective positions. There was also an attempt on the part of the Christinos to drive the Carlists from two houses on the southern bank of the Ria, where it

runs from Asua through the mountains. For this purpose they occupied the heights of Erandio, filling five houses and the adjacent road and hedges with tirailleurs who did their utmost to dislodge the Carlist householders, but in vain. In turn they were made to feel the practice of the mountain artilleros on the opposite heights of Areagas, which knocked their houses about their ears, (two were burnt by the grenades), and dislodged the reserves that sheltered behind. Both parties at night held their positions here also.

Espartero's floating bridge from Portugalete to the sands of Algorta, was all this time far from being at its ease. The heavy swell at the mouth of the river at length deranged the line so much, that two of the *chachemarees* went down, and the rest went adrift; so the Christino naval architects prudently removed them higher up the river, where they could always be sure of smoother water. Here having procured a couple of brigs in addition, and constructed a long *brow* with vessels and planks to compensate for the want of others, they commenced the formation of another bridge (in rather loose order) from the quarries of Monte Aspe on the causeway, across the widest part of the river to the marshes below fort Desierto. There was evidently a complete upsetting of the Christino plans: a dozen cannons which had been hauled up the heights of Aspe on

Saturday evening, were hauled down again on Sunday night, and no longer visible on Monday.

As day dawned (Monday the 5th), the movement of the vessels for the formation of the new bridge was perceived by the Carlists, and lest General Oraa should escape into his strong hold without a battle, Villarreal and Eguia descended into the plain at sunrise, and throwing forward their guerillas, commenced an attack on the whole Christino force then in possession of the Palacio of Zamorosta and all the north-east side of Asua, together with Sondica, Luchoa, and Erandio. Away went the Christinos,—the Carlists firing after and driving them successively out of the four villages: in short, up altogether out of the valley to take refuge in the precipitous heights of Ondis and Monte Aspe opposite the Convent of Desierto where the new bridge was in preparation to enable them to recross the river. They had (as we learnt from Christino officers who passed within the previous week to the service of the mountain King) 12,000 infantry, 150 cavalry, and five pieces of cannon, viz., one piece of twelve pounds, belonging to the fortifications of Desierto, and four four-pound field pieces. The Ria Asua was the grand line of demarcation between the two armies previous to the combat. The right of the Christinos rested on the heights of Ondis, their centre on the

village of Erandio, and their left on that of Sondica. Oraa commanded in the absence of Espartero; Escalera led the first division; the Baron de Meer the second; Carandolet the cavalry with his usual bad success. The Carlists had only a troop of Lancers under Capt. Don Manuel Crespi. The attack was commenced by two battalions, the sixth and eighth of Biscay, under the command of Aguirre, who had the previous night taken possession of the mountains towards Munguia, and at daybreak poured down on the Christinos at Sondica. These, finding themselves taken in flank, retired along the centre of the valley to Luchoa, when the entire right wing of the Carlists headed by Simon de la Torre, Count Mortara, &c. quickly forded the Ria below Asua and followed them up without giving them breathing-time. Villarreal who commanded the centre, now invested and carried the Palacio of the Marquis de Zamorosta, then threw some planks across the broken bridge of Azua, and attacking the centre of the Christinos, drove them fairly out of the village of Erandio and up to the heights, where their right was stationed in reserve. The Carlists' left under Goñi next passed the Ria and advanced to support the centre and ascend the hills; when the combat became general. The Carlist artillery thundering from the heights of Asua, Are-

agas, Cabras and Archanda, frequently did good service by checking the advance of the Christino masses which seemed every now and then coming down to exterminate the Carlist guerillas; but when the former found the ground tearing open before, beside and around them, they wisely halted and sought the protection of the houses, banks and ditches. I did not hear the Christino artillery all that day, but I have been assured by credible witnesses that two of their field-pieces were fired at a very safe distance—from the heights of Guecho and Algorta at the seaward end of the valley (Oraa very prudently objecting to trust them nearer to those dare-devil guerillas, who would have cheerfully ventured their lives for the pleasure of spiking them). The Christinos could scarcely believe their eyes when they saw Captain Crespi with fifteen *Lanceros* dashing after Lord Ranelagh, amongst their scores of guerillas. The latter took shelter in the *casarios*, and there safely housed, blazed away at the *Lanceros*, killing one horse and wounding two besides that of Lord Ranelagh; all the riders returned in safety; Captain Crespi with a bullet-hole in his *Boyna*—to be mended by *El Rey*, quite to his taste, with the ribbon of San Fernando.

The Christino cavalry, who were absolutely safe from the mountain artillery in the continuation of the valley towards Algorta, made one serious

charge about two o'clock against the Carlist guerillas of the left and centre, who were fast advancing up the heights of Erandio, clearing field after field, and taking ditch after ditch. The guerillas hastened back, some to the nearest houses, others to their battalion to find the necessary protection; but the Christinos rushed in before they could possibly gain the rear, and the result might have been serious, if the personal bravery of Villarreal and his staff (who were in front of a battalion) had not been exerted to inspire a confidence and reanimate their ardour. Seeing their General ready to share their danger, and cheering them on sword in hand to receive their enemies as if confident of victory, every man stood his ground, loaded, and fired away merrily amidst enthusiastic "*vivas!*"—although the mountaineers have an instinctive dread of meeting lancers on the plain, where the splendidly-mounted and well-armed Christinos looked as if they would prance over and trample them to dust on the instant. Villarreal, however, did not trouble his guerillas or his battalion with any untimely efforts to form into hollow square; or attempt to assume any of the scientific attitudes of the *tactica Francesa* (which the unskilled mountaineers would have assuredly bungled, and so have ruined all;)—but wisely threw out about a score of his little battalion to reinforce the guerillas, who

thenceforth responded so steadily to the threats of the cavalry, that the latter were glad to canter off; dragging with them two or three wounded Carlists whom they had overtaken, and leaving two or three of their own steeds and riders prostrate as an equivalent besides 40 infantry who were surrounded and compelled to surrender in a farm house, in which several others had been slain. (Vide Appendix C.)

Every one was sadly disappointed that Villarreal did not follow up his advantage with spirit, and pursue the retreating and dispirited Christino troops to the heights; from whence, in the unfinished state of their bridge, they had no means of escape, and could have had no other aid than the distant guns of Desierto;—if indeed the Christino artilleros could have discriminated between their friends and foes on the opposite bank of the river, in the shades of evening. The following *naïve* description of a fragment of this affair, is extracted from the letters of the correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* at Portugalete¹. Opposite views of things are very instructive, as the reader will doubt-

¹ "The day before yesterday I was present at an affair which at one time promised to be the forerunner of a general action. On the fine plain between the heights of Arriaga and Erandio a solid mass of Carlist infantry, about two battalions, appeared, having sallied forth from a small hamlet. This body was flanked by another battalion, drawn up in line at some distance on the right; and in the rear was a general, supposed to be Villarreal, and his

less confess, after perusing this admirable sketch of Christino tactics on the battle field. The writer

staff, with an escort of about a dozen lancers. Opposite was an equal portion of the Queen's troops, who were drawn up, ready to resist the enemy's attack. Guerillas were thrown out on both sides, and some desultory firing took place. The solid column of the Carlists moved steadily over the plain towards the Queen's battalions. This movement was so different from the usual practice of the Carlists, that one was almost at a loss how to account for it. At this moment a squadron of about 150 Lancers of the Queen were seen coming down a lane opening upon the plain; and it appeared certain that their intention was to cut the enemy off, and capture or destroy them. The cavalry advanced at rather a more moderate pace than I thought desirable; but it was suggested that probably they did so in order to keep their horses in wind. When they deployed upon the plain the Carlist column was still advancing; and both parties continued to do so until within pistol shot of each other, the guerillas being engaged on the flanks. As they drew nearer, however, I observed that now and then a few men from the ends of the Carlist companies fringed off, as it were, to the right and left, making the best of their way towards the hamlet in their rear. *Now* was the favourable moment for the Queen's cavalry to charge; the plain was before them, and the enemy attainable; instead of doing this they made a sort of curvetting move, the horses' legs going exceedingly fast, *without getting on*. This was enough, nevertheless, for the Carlists; the fringing off increased, the lancers pranced, and threw their horses on their haunches, and all on a sudden the Carlist column broke up¹, and a regular rush took place towards the hamlet. So anxious were the rebels to reach it, that most of them bent almost

¹ I did not see this breaking up of the Carlist column. The battalion headed by Villarreal and his staff stood its ground, as well as its detached guerillas.—E. B. S.

evidently does not comprehend the merits of the Carlist manœuvre of "fringing off" or throwing

double in running, yet the Queen's Lancers, thinking also, no doubt, that discretion is the better part of valour, remained stationary, drawing up on the edge of the plain in the best possible parade order. No sooner had the Carlists reached the houses than they valiantly began to fire away from behind them. It was a decided case of pusillanimity and bravado on both sides. I was close to General Oraa, who commanded in consequence of General Espartero's illness, during the whole affair. He was justly incensed at the conduct of the cavalry, by which so fine an opportunity had been lost of cutting off the whole Carlist column. He dispatched an aide-de-camp to reprimand the officer commanding, who sent back a message saying that all he begged was, that the General would release him from the command of a set of cowards who, at the critical moment, and when he was cheering them on to attack the enemy, refused to advance! This officer dismounted and joined the infantry column, which in the little it had to do behaved perfectly well. *The Carlist flanking column remained in position for about an hour afterward, when it retired, as did the General and his staff.* So ended these supposed preliminaries of a general action! In the early part of the day some sharp skirmishing took place with the infantry; and altogether about a hundred men were wounded and a few killed. Count Campo Alanja, a very fine young man, a grandee of Spain, and aide-de-camp to General Espartero, was severely wounded when gallantly leading a party on. He is in rather a dangerous state.

"Since the arrival of the army here up to this day the loss has been 110 killed and 450 wounded—in all 560. A number which, in my humble opinion, would not have been exceeded if, by judicious and energetic measures, Bilbao had been triumphantly entered, as it might have been, a week or more ago, by the Queen's forces."—*Correspondent of The Morning Chronicle, Dec. 7.*

out guerillas from a battalion to counteract a charge of cavalry ; nor did I, until I witnessed its efficacy and was let into the secret :—that the Carlist peasantry fight best singly,—each depending on himself ;—and the Conscript Christinos, worst in mass,—all infecting each other with their cowardice !

CHAPTER III.

WHILE the Carlists were beating Oraa on his own ground in the valley of Asua, on the 5th December, 2,000 men of the garrison of Bilbao assembled in Porta del Circo, from whence they made a sortie towards Begoña, where they burned six houses; but were speedily driven back by Sopelana and the Alavese with great loss. (Vide Appendix C.)

A British artillery officer, Lieut.-Col. B., and his son, arrived together at this period to enter the service of Don Carlos. Two other English amateurs, Lieutenant Bell and Mr. Salasbury Humphreys, also arrived on the 6th December to observe the progress of the siege.

In the night of the 5th, General Oraa began to form his new bridge across the Ria Nervion from the heights of Ondis, (the stronghold to which he had retreated) to the Convent of Desierto, opposite. He had not, however, boats enough to complete it,

and it remained unfinished until the 8th of December. All this time his forces and baggage remained on the east of the Ria, but the only movement of hostility made on either side was by the Carlists who placed a thirty-six pounder on the height of Areagas in hopes to annoy their bivouac, or shatter the bridge; the range however was too great for their half proof powder.

Meanwhile Eguia's engineers had been labouring at a mine commenced in the foundations of the Convent San Agustin and sunk under the Palacio Quintana in the Calle Sendeca, which formed the nearest out-work of the town. The garrison discovered the work, and successfully countermined it; so Eguia had to begin again elsewhere¹.

¹ The correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* at Portugalete, entered Bilbao with Espartero, and gives the following account of the discovery.—“A very remarkable incident occurred at this convent, which, as mentioned before, is within ten yards of the large house where the out-pickets of the Queen's were. One night the sentinel, a young Galician recruit, heard an unusual noise, like persons working or knocking at intervals at some heavy object with a large hammer. He mentioned it to his officer—more attention was paid to the sounds, which became now perceptible. The circumstance having been reported to the proper authorities, the chief engineer and other officers attended, and it appeared clear that the enemy were making a mine from the Augustin convent to the house. Immediately a countermine was commenced, and as it advanced, the surmises which had been formed were realised: the miner was distinctly heard at his work,

Oraa having at length completed the floating bridge, his cavalry and baggage descended from the heights of Ondis and Monte Aspe, and passed across it on the 8th,—his infantry following in the night to the fortified convent of San Nicolas.—Having filled it, the remainder marched thence to Portugalete, where beaten and dispirited they again found refuge, and a resting place. Their cowardice, demoralization and insubordination were truly disgraceful.

Deserters arrived daily and in numbers at the Carlist camp. They were estimated at an average of sixteen per diem while General Oraa encamped in the valley of Asua. They said that a large part

and the countermine was proceeded with, with due caution. At length, after several days, the end of the Carlist miner's crow-bar was thrust through the thin partition of earth which remained between him and the Christino delver—the latter caught hold of the bar and endeavoured to pull it through; the Carlist supposing, no doubt, that the stop to his bar arose from its having got hitched between two stones, or something of that sort, worked it from side to side, in order to extricate it. The Christino held on, and worked with him, 'till the aperture having become sufficiently large, he gave one strong pull at the crow-bar, wrested it from the hands of the Carlist, threw it behind him, and thrusting a blunderbuss which he had for his protection into the hole, fired at the scared miner, who was killed, and the enemy's plan frustrated. Had the Carlists succeeded in blowing up the Palacio (as the house is called,) they would, probably, in the confusion, have got into the city."

of the Christino army was not at all unwilling to change sides if a fair opportunity presented itself; a consummation which was nearly brought about in the action near the bridge of Castrejana, on Espartero's attempt to force a passage on the 26th Nov. when he was fired at by one of his own men, who narrowly missed him. The fellow was immediately secured, and shot of course. Some of his garrison in Desierto, who had been prowling about and plundering the houses of the peasantry around it, met with severe retribution at the hands of the Carlist guerillas of the watchful Castor, who caught them in the fact. At the east of the river also, during the previous week, the Christino soldiers were busy in similar operations, but the Basque peasantry are dangerous subjects for pillage. Three scoundrels who had entered a *casario* to pursue "their vocation" amongst the farmer's chattels, carelessly laid down their muskets beside the kitchen fire, and proceeded to rifle the apartment in the presence of the family. This was more than Basque flesh and blood could bear. Three *muchachos* snatched up the muskets, shot their owners, and then fled for their lives to the Carlist camp, ready made and well equipped soldiers for Villarreal. I was told by a native of Erandio whom I met in Munguia after the battle of Asua (he being burnt out with the rest,) that twenty-five houses were

given to the flames in that single village and town-land by the Christinos (as usual) after their retreat on the night of the 5th December.

Whilst General Oraa was bridge-making, and the Carlists were incomprehensibly allowing him to escape without a blow, I rode to Bermeo where I found in dock the Anglo-American brig *Opelousas*.

This was the vessel respecting which the English consul in Bilbao had sent a *cartel* to Eguia, reclaiming it as a neutral bottom, and urging its liberation; and in bearing a reply to which, the Carlist *Parlementario* Don Mariano Sanz had been shot at the gate of San Agustin, notwithstanding the protection of the flag of truce he bore. Captain Collins had not recovered from the astonishment into which this reckless atrocity threw him. He had never heard of such a thing perpetrated by the aborigines of *Opelousas*, or any other part of the new world; and could not have believed that the Christinos were such savages, or the Carlists were such honest and sociable people, if he had not had his own experience of both. Instead of robbing, stealing, or confiscating his cargo, they bought it from him at his own price, and taught him Spanish into the bargain, while he was delayed by the confusion into which his case was thrown by the murder of Eguia's messenger. When I saw him on the 11th December, the naval authorities of

the little fishing town had his sails safely laid up in store; but he was daily expecting an order from Durango, for their release. He gave me a few pounds of raw Havannah coffee, which I was very glad to carry in my knapsack to the siege, and roast at leisure—no such berry being to be found on the heights of San Domingo; or in the café at Olaveaga, after the first week of our descent from Banderas. He had brought a good store of tea; but the ladies enjoyed it so much of an evening on deck, that he had not a leaf left to give me. With respect to their dealings, he assured me they were “the most honest of *intelligent* people he had ever met,” a great compliment from a Baltimore trader, and rather contradictory of all his former experience in every other part of the world. It seems that the safe rule of both American and African trade is,—“You may trust a regular savage to any extent the first voyage, and he will pay you honestly the second; but as soon as he learns a few words of English, and begins to attend a missionary school and all that;—you cannot trust him with a single nail.”

During the disposal of his cargo, Capt. Collins only recollected having had one “difficulty;” notwithstanding his ignorance of Spanish at the commencement. A female country shopkeeper had purchased some hundred-weights of his tobacco, paid him

fully in dollars, and went her way with her purchase. Next day she returned, to tell him that on counting what remained, she found she had paid him so many too much. "Well!" observed Captain C. to me, "You know it would not have done for me to give into claims of this kind, and to pay back money after counting, and settling and forgetting all about it. So I held my own, till she prayed that if she was telling me a lie, no child might ever be born to her—and there was every prospect of an arrival within a month or so. There was no weathering *that* point you know?—so I gave her the dollars!"—He intended taking going to Bourdeaux a cargo of cod-fish when his affair was settled, and assured me he was so well pleased with his adventure, that he would return with another of salt or tobacco to Bermeo.

As soon as Espartero's troops had safely repassed the Nervion to Portugalete, he wisely broke up his bridge of *Cachemarees*, and cut off all possibility of pursuit. The Carlist guerillas too late attempted to annoy him in his retreat; for when they appeared on the heights of Aspe, soon after sunrise, the Christinos were out of their reach, and the guerillas only wasted powder in firing after them. Nevertheless, a few sharp-shooters who daily occupied these heights, very much annoyed the *trincaduras*, and seriously interfered with the communication by boats between Desierto and Portugalete.

On the 9th December, the Christinos were seen collecting their craft for the purpose of again forming a bridge across the Ria Galinda, nearly in the same place as before; but the despairing garrison, perceiving no movement of troops, on either side for their relief, were busy signaling by telegraph from Miravalles to Portugalete; and (as we afterwards learned) addressed, on this day, the following pithy leading question to his excellency, Don Baldemero: "Does General Espartero mean to suffer Bilbao to perish?" The answer said to have been returned was, "General Espartero will relieve Bilbao to-morrow or perish himself." The morning came, but nothing was stirring except the bridge—which had broken up just before sunrise with the ebb; having been constructed on the height of a tide swollen by freshes from the mountains! That day and the next were passed in unsuccessful attempts at its reconstruction; and it was not till nine o'clock in the morning of the 12th, that it was completed. By one o'clock all their troops passed as before, foot, horse and two field-pieces, advancing by Baracaldo, the heights of Routegui, Bursaña and the mountain of St. Agatha, along the roads and fields by which they made their unsuccessful attempt on the 26th November. As on that occasion, the Carlist guerillas retreated before them to the narrow paths on the steep side of the

mountain, as far as the church of St. Agatha, where they made a stand ; and, commencing the attack in their turn, drove back the Christino guerillas, cavalry, column and all (as before) to the low grounds of Baracaldo and almost to their bridge of boats, where night, as usual, came for their protection. I must do the Christinos the justice to say that some of their officers displayed great gallantry. Two of them who led the attack rode a-head of their guerillas, everywhere and always in advance, and dashed amongst the Carlists on splendid horses (a black and a bright brown) which carried them over everything. They were hit at last,—in the attempt to infuse some spirit into their cowardly followers ; virtually sacrificed (the brown horse fell also, the black galloped back,) but it was only surprising how they escaped so long. Oraa kept a strong body in reserve at Baracaldo all day, and made no movement indicative of the threatened grand and decisive attempt to force the bridge of Castrejana. The Carlist guerillas did not allow his troops to pass the church of St. Agatha on this occasion, or to descend the height towards the bridge—keeping them at bay a long musket shot above it. Villarreal was as usual fighting in person at the head of his staff on the mountains, where he bivouacked in the

evening. He had eight pieces of artillery bearing on the bridge, but his guerillas had all the honour of the repulse to themselves.

At this period Bilbao was in a wretched state, the garrison having no meat, and reduced to a quarter of a pound of bread, the same of biscuit, an ounce of rice and two ounces of salt cod per diem. The only full ration the soldiers continued to receive was of wine, and it was said that symptoms of a contagious disease were beginning to appear, consequent on the insufficient diet to which all classes were exposed. There never was any absolute famine felt, for the peasantry would run considerable risks to introduce provisions into the town, for which the besieged paid liberally enough;—but singular, as it may appear, they could never obtain any intelligence of what the Carlists were doing; as I was afterwards assured by a gentleman of Bayonne who happened to be shut in while on a commercial visit, and spent the greater part of his time under a *port cocher* to save his head from the bomb shells. Eguia was all this time continually constructing and reconstructing his batteries with every care, varying their positions and trying the effect of new combinations to counteract the heavy plunging fire which the town forts poured down upon them,—from which they suffered more and

more, the nearer they approached the walls in the quarter chosen for attack, which was unfortunately the strongest angle of the ramparts.

The hill, on which the lines and cross lines of forts that protect the town on the side of San Domingo are built, converges and slopes down from Begoña to the gate of San Agustin, like a sugar-loaf (turned on its side) from base to point:—the prostrate apex terminating at the captured Convent. The whole force of the hill forts, step above step on these heights, commanded the suburb of San Agustin; so that even when the Convent was in possession of the Carlists, they had still every thing above to contend with, and their labours were little more than begun. The garrison had taken all possible defensive precautions;—fortifying wall after wall within the threatened positions adjoining, to fall back upon, if necessary;—building up streets to check the progress of the assailants if they should contrive to burst through all the outer impediments; pulling down houses through and through the blocks of buildings near the gates of la Cujes and San Agustin, to check their advances to the interior, (in the good old Roman style of stopping the progress of a conflagration,) and lining all the quays with casks of sand, to form a continuous parapet, and shelter the passing troops from

the aim of the guerillas in the opposite suburb of Albia.

Whilst the Christino guerillas on the morning of the 12th were endeavouring to clear the way for their masses on the hills above the bridge of Castrejana, Eguia was again trying the powers of his breaching battery on the Palacio Quintana in the Calle Sendeca, the remaining outer defence in the suburb of San Agustin. It consisted of four guns (a thirty-six, a twenty-four, and two sixteen pounders) aided by five others (a long twenty-four, a twenty-four carronade, two of eight, and a small mortar) at the other side of the river in Albia. Nothing, however, could stand the superiority of position, of pieces, and of powder, which the garrison enjoyed. The Carlist breastworks and embrasures lasted only a few hours under the heavy hammering directed against them by the broadside arrangement of fifteen pieces overhead; the guns were dismantled and silenced;—being either dismounted or prudently withdrawn and reserved for a more favourable chance, or for more efficient service against Espartero on the hills.

The heavy rain of the 13th December was an effectual bar to any active operations either on the mountains, or in the suburbs of Bilbao. The next

morning, however, the weather cleared up, and the Christinos recommenced their guerilla warfare; engaging those of Castor's single battalion in their usual very prudent style along the heights above Burseña and Baracaldo, and on the mountains of St. Agatha and St. Lucia on the left side of the Ria Nervion. Their efforts were so cautious and feeble that Villarreal, who went across the bridge of Castrejana to make a reconnoissance on the hills that morning, attended only by a single company of guerillas, appeared to afford them embarrassing occupation above; while two of his eight-pounders stationed at the Cordeleria of Saroza, kept their two field-pieces in check on the low grounds. The Carlists also lined the parapet at their side of the Ria Salcedon, and effectually prevented the Christino infantry approaching its shores. These low grounds were occupied by Goñi with three battalions; the bridge of Castrejana was held by Pablo Sanz with three others; while Castor repelled all their attacks on the mountains with one. Another Carlist battery was planted on the heights above Saroza, consisting of a large twenty-four pounder, a four pound field-piece, and a small mortar,—commanding both the ford of Quadra beneath, and the road over the opposite heights of St. Agatha leading to the bridge. The Christino masses lay in Baracaldo,

where they had little shelter at night, save what the naked walls of the houses they burned on the 27th Nov. afforded them. Towards evening they made a movement with a battalion and a field-piece along this road, (out of sight of the Carlists, for the hill lay between,) obviously with the intention of driving Villarreal and his company from the church of St. Agatha. A strong party of their's, already in the field, at the same time ascended the mountain at the opposite side, and having attained the summit, commenced firing at the church, the General and his reconnoitring party—half-a-mile below. They feared, however, to descend, and wisely kept on the ridge awaiting the battalion and the field piece. These at last arrived on the brow of the hill where the road to the church of St. Agatha rounded into view, and unperceived, took up a position opposite the Carlist 24-pounder and instantly fired on it. I happened to be seated beside the gun at the moment, amidst a group of staff officers who were wishing for something to do, (there being very little fighting going on, and Villarreal was selfishly keeping it all to himself, a mile in advance, at the Christino side of the Ria Salcedon); and was amused to observe how gratified they were to hear the ball whistling over their heads. Comandante Trovo's shout of "*Artilleros!*" brought every man to his gun, and the

next instant his twenty-four shot was doing duty in the midst of the Christino battalion, which thereupon wisely checked its march towards St. Agatha's church, wheeled back and took shelter at the opposite side of the brow. His second shot evidently made the forsaken group of gunners feel uncomfortable ;—at the third, the Christino field-pieces took to flight after the battalion, while the Carlists made the valley between ring with shouts and laughter. Five shots in all were fired at us across the river, not one of which could we find, though all the idlers watched the balls attentively; marking and hunting them down like gamekeepers. The threatened movement defeated, the Christino guerillas' also retired for the night, and the Carlists again took possession of all the upper part of the Ria Salcedon ;—boldly scattering into the mountains beyond; while Espartero, having once more ascertained that he could effect nothing by way of Castrejana, withdrew his dispirited troops to Baracaldo and Desierto, where the cannons of the convent afforded them a welcome protection.

The Carlist batteries were now allowed to lie silent four or five days. In fact, the further success of the siege appeared to depend on the operations in the mountains; and as Espartero and Oraa insisted on making it an affair of artillery

there, the principal Carlist artilleros took the field to gratify him. However, on the night of the 14th a decided change for the worse took place in the weather. Chilling gusts from the Bay of Biscay swept over the mountains, drenching them with heavy rain every half-hour. All the day following, a similar succession of tempest showers came driving in—strange compounds of mist, rain, hail and whirlwind, as strangely followed by gleams of sunshine and delusive calms. It was the coldest day I had felt since the famous 29th of October last, which raised the former siege by driving everybody from the heights of San Domingo. It was now the Christinos' turn to feel the severity of the weather. The Carlist mountaineers were seasoned to every variety of weather, torrid or frigid,—but the foresight of Eguia prevented the necessity of exposing them to its inclemency. All who were not on actual duty in the mountains, slept comfortably in the captured districts of Duesto. The lower part of it (Olaveaga) accommodated in succession the battalions who guarded the water lines towards Portugalete, while the upper (Goyerri) was occupied by those blockading the town and guarding the batteries. The Christino masses, on the contrary, were lying out for three nights (after the march to St. Agatha)

in a mountainous country, desolated by themselves eighteen days before, and must have felt the effects of the northern blasts very severely.

On the 13th and 14th they were engaged in constructing two batteries on the heights of Baracaldo, above Burseña, evidently intending to borrow some of the heavy arms of the convent of Desierto to batter the Carlists out of the opposite Cordeleria of Saroza (which the Duke of Wellington had fitted up as an hospital during his Basque campaign;) and then at their ease to throw across the mouth of the Ria Salcedon the pontoon bridge which General Evans had obligingly sent Espartero from the Ria Uremea; but they were so annoyed by the guns of the Cordeleria and of Monte de Cabras, and so disheartened by the bad weather, that on the afternoon of the 15th they gave up the attempt, having only succeeded in completing the embrasures; when the whole army retired to seek shelter (for the second time) in Desierto, Zamorosto, and Portugalete. I must do the Christinos the justice to say, they seemed to understand the art of retreating very well indeed. I had now seen them beaten thrice within three weeks, and their masses thrice marching off in double-quick time in admirable order; as if they had studied and rehearsed the manœuvre till they were perfect in their parts. On these occasions, it was highly amusing

sight to behold the Carlist guerillas driving before them the imposing masses of their enemies.

Twenty of the Royal Guard passed over to the Carlist ranks on the 16th of December, and five others who were taken in a house in Burseña during the pursuit, said that they also intended to desert; but had been prevented at the moment by seeing other comrades who attempted it shot by their fellows as they ran to the Carlists. The road along which the Column was pursued was extensively stained with blood. A Carlist shell fell into one of the batteries which the Christinos had been preparing in Baracaldo on the previous day, killing one artillero and wounding nine. Again the Christinos put into execution their infernal incendiary policy, and set fire to the houses that had previously escaped them: a most intelligible signal of the rancour and recklessness of despair.

Espartero and the Christino columns slept in Portugalete the night of the 15th, and the whole country was again clear of them, with the exception of Desierto and that portion under its guns. A couple of *trincaduras* ventured to show themselves a little further up the Ria than usual on the morning of the 16th, between the convent of Desierto and the bridge of Luchana; but after a few shots from the mountain batteries, they were glad to scud back again. Their bridge of boats also

under Desierto (the fourth) was broken up the previous night—and not a vestige of it was visible in the morning.

Eguia had at this period two bridges of boats laid across the Ria Nervion, from Olaveaga to Albia, each well secured by chain cables. These and the series of piles higher up within full view of the garrison, cut off from the town all possibility of relief by any attempts of the war steamers to force a sudden passage. They might have accomplished it and they ought to have attempted it in the *first* instance, and have dashed up the Ria with their four steamers before the Carlists were prepared; instead of “waiting a while” and then endeavouring to storm inaccessible mountain positions where they had been well beaten two years ago by Zumalacarregui while on a similar errand. But Espartero was exquisitely whimsical and indecisive; and on every occasion continued to afford most gratifying proofs that he was impenetrable to experience. Don Carlos could not have had a better friend at the head of his enemies. The estimate which the most “respectable” portion of his troops formed of his capabilities and chances of success as a General, may be guessed from the fact, that on the 15th of Decr. 200 of the Royal Guards passed over in a body to the Carlists near Villaba. The rest were only saved by a forced march to Pampeluna.

CHAPTER IV.

THE Christinos having once more retreated from the mountains on which they had threatened Castrejuna Bridge—and Eguia being occupied in restoring his guns from the batteries in the hills to those in the suburbs of San Agustin and Goyerri ;—we had a couple of days' leisure, which I employed in riding to and from Durango, five leagues distant ; my wardrobe being in an undeniable state of siege, and almost unfit to be seen even on the mountains. I was informed that there were such persons in the camp as tailors and shoemakers ; but on the strictest inquiry I could not find any cloth or leather ; so

¹ That amusing gossip, the *Phare de Bayonne*, assured its readers that Eguia had lost his nose in one of these mountain skirmishes :—an ungenerous rumour of rivalry, destitute of the shadow of truth, for the General's nose still stands proudly pre-eminent, "unhurt amidst the war of elements," "like a goodly tower by the sea side," as Solomon sings,—of which *Le Phare* may well be envious.

of necessity, I rode to refit in Durango. The mountains were covered with mists through which the muleteers would not attempt to find the paths, so I, (not presuming to know them better though I passed that way thrice,) descended with others to the old paved road by the side of the river Nervion amongst the once beautiful valleys of Begoña, now bearing sad traces of the effects of civil war. This district has suffered severely in the late sortie from the town, when several houses were burned. Their blackened and crumbling remains struck the eye as melancholy memorials of the Christino line of march that day. The valley road although level enough, was one of the worst I ever travelled; and torrents of rain fell to make it worse. It was a series of dislocated stones, round and smooth as selected from the river, once paved in continuous ribs along the route, but now presenting only a series of fractures with pools between. I registered "a vow" in my road book never to go that way again unless I could not possibly help it;—so on completing my business in Durango, I returned on the 18th along the fine *Camino Real* which passes within musket shot of the town, as being far preferable. A military friend who was anxious to be in time for the expected cannonade, accompanied me; and with the aid of the good road, we arrived at the Puente Nuevo under the guns of the

lower Morro, just as Eguia opened fire upon the Palacio Quintana at the other side of the town. The deep and narrow gap through which we entered on the bridge, afforded one would think, a most tempting opportunity to the gunners opposite; however they did not fancy us just then; so we rode quietly over the long bridge without a single salute, though our Carlist *boynas* and tassels marked us as fair game, and they had providently demolished the battlement nearest to themselves to get a clear aim at passengers. A little further up the river, nearer to the Morro, the advanced guard of the besiegers were amusing themselves pitching the bar. A parapet of stones ran across it for their shelter, but so low, that the man who watched the gunners above was obliged to go on his knees to make himself small enough. Passing along with impunity as we did, I could not forbear criticising the apparent *vis inertiae* of the Christino artilleros. "Pool!" said my friend, "two horsemen are not worth wasting powder and shot upon!" This was rather mortifying. "One of us may be a General for what they know?" I suggested, "but they wont even try!" "Not one shot in a hundred hits!" said he, "and the ninety-nine are wasted. I suppose they have not killed even a donkey since they opened fire on the bridge!" "That calculation may do for the Spaniards;" said I, "but being an Irishman, I

assure you that if I were a gunner up there, I could not resist the temptation of having a shot at ourselves down here !”

Thus we argued the point till we crossed the bridge, when the artilleros having us nicely in a line with the Carlist guard, threw a new light on the subject, by a shot which came bounding down the road, intended “for all and several,” as they say in the Highlands, but which fortunately, was turned aside in its course by a trip against the little parapet. The Carlists never stopped their game, and we passed on, acknowledging that the gunners of Morro-bajo were more attentive and ingeniously economical than we had imagined. The musketry of the church of Begoña was a much more serious gauntlet to run; but, fortunately, the smoke of the Carlist cannonade came sweeping up the hill side in this direction, and interposed its good offices until we had passed by. A little further on, an elevated terrace of the road exposed us to the fire of Fort Larrinaga, and one of its shells was accordingly sent on a reconnoissance; but the beneficent powder smoke refracted us and our position to the gunner’s eye with a variation of about twenty yards from the true altitude, so that his projectile went about its business very harmlessly. Continuing our course up the mountains, we were rather startled at falling in with an

advanced guard of Christinos, on what we knew three days before to have been Carlist territory. We had heard of no sortie from the town since then; but, as Charles Matthews used to say, "It might have happened, you know" that morning. They did not fire on us! They did not even challenge us! Possibly they took us for officers from the garrison, reconnoitering? There they sat smoking at their ease as we rode up to them! Farther on, one of Castor's Biscayan guerillas was walking leisurely over the mountain, denying himself the pleasure of a shot at them; as if he never took any amusement of that kind now-a-days! "O, that's impossible!" said my friend, "These must be some of the recent deserters from Espartero?" So it was. They were just commencing a new line of duty, and fortunately for us made no mistakes arising from the force of habit, for which we felt properly grateful,—there being neither parapet nor powder cloud between us. However, the eye does not become reconciled in a moment to such anomalous apparitions. I had been watching these fellows for three weeks doing their best to pepper my good friends the Carlists, on hill or plain; and it only seemed to coincide with the fitness of things and of uniforms, that they should take a snug aim at us now. But they were old soldiers: they did not even throw away a word on us; and we

arrived in excellent time for the operations directed against the Palacio in the Calle Sendeca.

The results, however, were nearly the same as before. The superior number and calibre of the guns which the town was able to bring to bear on the 4 batteries (viz. two in Albia, one in Campo Volantin, and one in Uribarri) prevented the latter from effecting a practicable breach before the short day was so far gone as to render their further efforts useless; so they ceased about four in the afternoon. The very echoes of the town discharges were convincing that the powder of its defenders was of a superior quality to that of its assailants, and that they used it much more liberally. Eguia did not renew the attack next day, as Espartero was early stirring at Desierto,—bringing up his reinforcements in a long column from Portugalete, reinforced and amounting, it was said, to 16,000 men and 250 cavalry;—preparing for a fourth attempt to relieve the town, by re-crossing the river Nervion to the right bank once more, aided by a new bridge (the fifth) of boats.

About noon a steamer (believed to be French), came up the Ria with stores and artillery (eighteen pieces as we were assured), and landed them opposite the convent—under the quarries of Monte Aspe, on the quay road from the broken bridge of Luchana to the sands of Algorta. The troops

in fort Desierto speedily crossed over in launches, and before dusk, 7,000 at least had passed and taken possession of the heights. A slight skirmish took place between the advanced Carlist post (the 6th battalion of Biscay,) at the village of Erandio, and the descending column penetrating to take up its old position there; which ended by the Christinos retreating to the heights for the night.

The state of Bilbao at this time was desperate. Two deserters (one an Urbano) informed us that their powder was nearly exhausted, and that the garrison were reduced to rations of 1 ounce of oil, 2 ounces of rice, 2 ounces of bacon, and $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of small biscuits for two days; they had still some wine and brandy. Orders had been issued commanding all families to deliver up any morsels of provision they possessed on pain of death. They were of course allowed rations; but it was stated that they obtained still less and worse than the garrison, and not regularly each day as the latter did. The town was, in fact, reduced to the last extremity; and (what appeared to annoy the besiegers considerably,) the Christino authorities had succeeded in impressing the minds of the Urbanos and the garrison with the notion that the Carlists would shew them no quarter if they surrendered! Eguia, who is humanity personified,

did, I believe, all he could to undeceive them; but such difficulties attended the task, (especially since the death of his *Parlementario*,) that nothing effective was accomplished for the removal of the delusion; and the besieged continued to resist, with all the desperation of despair.

The two English brigs of war, (the *Saracen* and *Ringdove*,) lay quietly all this time under the guns of Desierto, at the quay from whence Espartero's troops were crossing. We were informed that during the previous week, the *Saracen* had fired three shots amongst the Carlists on shore: intelligence that surprised every one considering that they were not molested! I myself saw one of these brigs firing two shots during Oraa's last passage of the Ria Nervion; and I know that the British steamer which towed up the launches on the 27th ult. (to convey home the wounded from the attack at the bridge of Castrejana on the 26th), also fired a gun; but not having heard of any damage inflicted thereby, I had conjectured that they were but signals. Certainly those brigs lay in a very awkward position on the 19th, under the direct fire between the guns of the convent and those of the Carlists on the hills of Cabras and Archanda. The latter, however, acting by the express directions of Eguia, cautiously abstained from inflicting any injury on them.

A letter was that morning received from Gomez, at Orduña, 15 miles south of Bilbao, where he had arrived with 4,000 men, 800 horses, and thirty-five prisoners of rank, including Brigadiers Flinter and Puente. Every one was in amazement, and asked if he had dropped from the sky !

We were now all again on the hills. The mules and oxen were tugging the guns from the batteries in San Agustin up the rocky and miry roads to bring them to bear for the fourth time on the approaching Christinos ;—so often had Eguia been disturbed in his operations. He and Villarreal now took up their head-quarters at the hill fort of Banderas overlooking all the enemy's operations. The road and river from Portugalete to Desierto, the bridge of boats to the opposite side, and the heights of Aspe, Ondis, and Erandio, were covered with the Christino masses. Between the armies, ran the Ria Asua, across which individuals frequently conversed. To the east of Banderas lay the great valley which Espartero was beaten out of on the 5th of December, and to the west the fertile plain of Deusto, hemmed in between the Ria Nervion and the continuous hills of Archanda and St. Domingo. This rich tract of alluvion is crowded with *casarios* (farm-houses), cottages, gentlemen's seats, convents, and even palacios, worthy of the name, but now deserted, or

occupied as barracks or stores. Goyerri, the upper part nearest Bilbao, and most exposed to its cannonade—is, or rather was, lined with stores for ship goods, &c. Many of these now lie in ruins from the effect of the shells, in the attempts of the garrison to dispossess the besiegers. Olaveaga is the lower and more agricultural part of the plain, under the convent of los Capuchinos and Fuerte Banderas, where the river makes an extensive circuit to the west,—shaping the plain into a semicircle; and the buildings principally those of the farmers and ship storekeepers, extend along it in a street for more than a mile, with an excellent road, or rather quay, between. The houses are better built than in any other country part of the provinces I have seen; and when the vines were in leaf, and climbing up the balconies, as they were when we first arrived in October,—the scene was delightful. Here Eguia held his head-quarters while active operations were going on against the town; but when the Columns crossed to the east, he took up his abode in the mountains above, which run from Banderas south for several miles, extending nearly to Durango, completely separating the long valley of Duesto and the towns of Bilbao, Galdacano and Zornosa on the west, from those of Erandio, Asua, Luchoa, Sondica, Zamudio, &c., on its eastern side.



At any other time I should have been a gratified amateur amongst the treasures of architecture and agriculture displayed before me ; but during the two sieges which I had the pleasure and sorrow of being witness to, my attention was very forcibly turned into other channels. All day (and sometimes all night too) my eyes and ears were filled with the sights and sounds of war, a thousand times more striking and impressive than ever they appear in a plain. I would give very little indeed to see a campaign in Holland, Flanders, Courland, or any of the flat "prize-fighting grounds of Europe;" but a siege of Bilbao is a display of the picturesque, worth coming from China to behold. The valley is a splendid stage—an immense amphitheatre for the display of military effects; while the circling heights afford the amateur superb positions and points of view that vary at every step, and form altogether one of the most magnificent natural Colosseums in the world. Every day in fine weather the hills were crowded with spectators; and never did a spectacle of ancient or modern times attract a more numerous, interested or enthusiastic audience. The Infante Don Sebastian and his staff were constant attendants, and during the grand performances, had a private box (Fuerte Banderas,) which afforded them a superior view of the Christino manœuvres ; interrupted occasionally by San

Nicholas del Desierto, who had the ill manners to pelt his Highness with grenades in the Irish "bottle and rattle" style. The Christino generals were incessantly bridge-building, house-burning, marching and counter-marching, and going through the prettiest sham battles imaginable. Twenty spy glasses were here in daily requisition to appreciate their movements, to identify the houses, or count the numbers that fell under the minute-guns of Castor's guerillas, and were soon stripped to their shirts either by friends or enemies. What bursts of applause from the lynx-eyed peasant spectators in the upper gallery, when their sons and brothers, in similar homely garb, chased the dashing and gallantly equipped Lancers of the Queen's Royal Guard before them ! What shouts of laughter when the experienced guerillas, rounding the hills to windward over Castrejana, set fire to the fern and heather, and then safely blazed away at the smoked and blinded Christinos ! I never knew before that human beings had such excellent sight,—but the fact was, that the telescopes of the Senores generally played second fiddle to the eyes of the *paysanos*. An exclamation, a laugh, or a hearty curse of the *soldado*, generally awakened and directed the attention of the telescopic Commandante to the point of attraction. It was highly instructive to get a seat beside any of the spectators

who knew the country or the town, and listen to their observations on the progress of a *concerted* cannonade or a bombardment played in the orchestra below, by the rampart and battery performers. I recollect that on the 17th November, I was sitting with three young ladies on the ridge of San Domingo, alternately watching the distant thrashing which Espartero was receiving from Villarreal at the bridge of Castrejana, and the storming of the Convent of San Agustin by the Arragonese just below us. These three girls were very pretty; but the three years' war had so deranged the equilibrium of beaux and belles in Biscay, that they were promenading without an escort till I offered my services. I found two of them particularly well-informed in the topography of the town and suburbs, forts and batteries; which they accounted for incidentally, by observing that they lived *there* (pointing out a pretty country-house in Uribarri beneath); but five cannon shot having passed through it the other day, they had come on a visit to their friend up *here*, and would probably remain with her till the siege was over! The Biscayans are indeed exceedingly social and hospitable. During the two recent sieges, the inmates of perhaps 1,000 houses, who were dispossessed in the dangerous vicinity of the town, all found shelter and refuge

among their more fortunate neighbours at a little distance; and during this whole period, I only saw a single beggar, the mother of a little child, in immediate want of a morsel of bread. Of the family parties whom I daily meet on the heights (for it was impossible to sit incuriously below, while there were such sights to be witnessed above) I found even the poorest courteous and generous; willing to share their bit of maize bread and bottle of chacoli with me and their neighbours, and enduring all the ills of war with a degree of patient hope and cheerful resignation that showed how deeply their feelings were interested in the success of the siege. The women were everywhere far more active and zealous partizans than the men. They only needed a hint that there were wounded soldiers lying in the hermitages of Santa Agatha, San Roque or San Domingo after an attack of the Column or a sortie from the town, and they would rise from their beds in the midst of the night, bundle them up and march with them on their heads, lanthorn in hand, for miles across the mountains; laden besides with all the little comforts they could carry; and afterwards they would sit and tend the poor *heridos* hour after hour, and come day after day while their services could avail. How stoically whole villages camped out on the hills, while the Christinos were marauding in their dwell-

ings! patiently watching the efforts of the Carlist artillery and guerillas to dislodge them; and when at last the cowardly Column had retired for the night, with what shouts and *vivas!* they would dance down again to take possession. There was always something interesting to be seen or heard on the heights on a fine day, that well rewarded the trouble of the ascent;—but in bad weather all one's faculties were absorbed in the single sense of feeling, and it was useless to think of anything except the storm which seemed inclined to blow you over the hill with the falling leaves—the thunder-showers that threatened to wash you into the river below—or the freezing mixture of snow, hail, sleet and mist, that was doing its best to transform you into an icicle. Fine days, however, still intervened, and actually prolonged the Biscayan autumn to the 20th of December; and on these it was a luxury to be out and enjoying life on the mountains. The valley of the Bilbao river or Ria Nervion (the long western vale of operations), is of a whimsically tortuous figure, not unlike the great brass serpent in the royal Spanish band; and like it, was, while the siege lasted, a very fine musical instrument, whose compass and execution continually attracted my admiration. Unlike the serpent, however, it was played at each end (Morro and Portugalete), as well as at a variety of intermediate points:—

Miravalles, Begoña, Campo Volantin, Burseña, Banderas, Bilbao, Monte de Cabras, San Nicolás, San Agustín, San Mamés, San Vincento, and a number of other saintly stations, where cannons and mortars of all calibres were daily practising their gamut with all imaginary "shakes, graces, and variations," accomplishing the most "difficult effects," and awakening echoes that, like some self-satisfied amateurs, once set a going, could not stop themselves. Every ravine had its peculiar note, heard to the greatest advantage at the upper extremity; where, often, while traversing the summit paths, the airy concussions have rushed up with abrupt velocity, taking me by surprise and striking upon my ear with a startling violence! There was one ravine leading up to the old windmill of San Domingo, the sides of which, feathered with pines and firs, gave birth to some comically aspirated sounds, that when repeated continuously, produced strange sardonic guttural laughing intonations, worthy of incorporation in the demoniac *scenas* of *Der Freischütz*, or *Robert le Diable*. I shall never forget the shrill fiendish scream that issued from San Francisco's warning belfrey, when just as it was enunciating "one, two, three," for a shell—a sacrilegious Carlist ball dashed in—sending the fragments singing and shrieking over the city! (N. B. San Francisco, in revenge, mounted a steeple-gun next

day, which spit spitefully.) Different and still more *recherché* results were perceptible when the auditor took a seat at the mouth of a ravine *under* the line of balls coming either from muskets or cannon; but the disadvantage of this position was, that one could not exactly tell when the performance was over, and the sittings, therefore, were sometimes disagreeably long. Again, those erratic discords, the shells, often fell (like fellows thrown over) into the very pit among the critics. However, in time we became acquainted with the compass of every piece in the valley (that is, every note of the Serpent), and could tell which was struck (or was striking) with tolerable precision; always making the needful allowance for the double charge which the Christino players habitually employed. I made some interesting discoveries on the effects of mixed echoes and the laws of their consecutive prolongations, as well as on the undulatory progression of projectiles; but I left in such haste on Christmas morning, that my theories thereanent are as yet quite unpresentable.

The illumined spectacle by night was frequently far better worth attending to than that enacted by day. In the October siege, the bombardment in the dark was splendid beyond description; the burning suburb of Goyerri was frightfully grand. In the recent operations, the illuminations were

still more extensive. The convents of Burseña and San Agustin blazed for two nights each; the former burned by the Carlists to deprive Espartero of a stronghold; the latter bombarded by the town to drive out the Arragonese who had taken it by storm. The night exhibitions of the shells and granades sent by the garrison into the new batteries, among the engineers and workmen, was magnificent. They certainly did a great deal of mischief, levelling parapets as fast as they were raised; but still one could not help admiring them as they came, "describing that beautiful figure, a parabola," (as Geoffrey Crayon has it, for the consolation of the "grown horsemen," his pupils, who might be flung right-a head out of the saddle). The Carlist soldiers at last became so familiarized with their appearance, that they received them as ordinary visitors, troublesome indeed, but who, nevertheless, would not be denied. The granadiers of the 1st of Castile were one night sitting telling stories in a snug corner of the convent of San Agustin, when a shell fell bang into the midst of the good company. They had no time to escape, so the story-teller named Aprice (no Welshman, nevertheless), bundled up his cloak in double quick time, and threw it and himself right upon the hissing fuse! Instead of blowing him up, it good naturedly went out and allowed him to go on with

his story ! In the morning he presented it to Eguia, who, instead of the usual fee, presented him with a couple of dollars for his exploit, but would not grant him a brevet for the process of extinction. —Occasionally the side of one of the great valleys of Bilbao, Asua or Castrejana, would exhibit a running line of flames, curling and crackling along the summits for miles,—presenting strange unearthly sights and sounds in the darkness and stillness of night,—all proceeding from a spark of some guerrilla watchfire carried off by the night breeze, and fanned into destructiveness amongst the heath, furze and fern which it happened to find in its course. Occasionally rocks, ravines and trees intervened, and the wind rose and lulled again, giving birth to wild variations in the features of these gigantic fireworks, which I have never seen equalled in the supernatural scenery of the German drama. Then the village of Begoña burned in a sortie of the garrison, and those of Baracaldo, Algorta, and Erandio, destroyed by the Christino columns, illuminated the surrounding country night after night ; all suitably terminated by the yule-fires of Banderas, which Espartero kindled to light him into Bilbao on Christmas-eve.

Each season had its appropriate amusement. On fine days hunting for cannon-balls was a popular recreation. It was highly interesting to observe

the races of the *soldados* to the spots where they struck, (perceptible only at the instant by the cutting of the grass or heath through which they took to earth), and the speed with which they unkenelled each, that they might be at leisure to mark the flight and descent of the next. The balls were fair game to every one, and ready money (tenpence) to the sportsman who bagged them. "You give a peseta for a ball," said a Navarrese wag to Eguia one day, "what do you give for a cannon?" "*Vamos á vere!* Let us see your great gun," said the cautious old General. The fellow produced a swivel from beneath his cloak, amidst roars of laughter. He had found it in a ship store in Olaveaga (where the Christinos had forgotten it), and now begged leave to present it to the artillery department, with an humble claim to serve as captain of the gun when it was mounted on something. The cannon-balls on both sides occasionally took strange flights of fancy, and left their marks in most out-of-the way places, for the edification of all whom it might concern. Several went out of town, and buried themselves in the English graveyard in the Albia on the river side, just below the Half-moon Island,—along with the former Captain and Surgeon of the Ringdove, and the officers who fell in the campaigns of the Duke of Wellington. The pretty cupola of the Campo Santo fort, on the

town ramparts, had holes in its noddle distributed with such Promethean regularity, that, viewed from the height of San Domingo, they presented a very inquisitive countenance—eyes, nose, mouth, ears and chin all complete. On the other hand, a Christino ball from the convent of San Mamès dashed in through the church door of San Pedro in Deusto, previously knocking down a tree that stood in its way, and finally lodged in the pulpit! Another took off the head of San Antonio as he stood in the niche of his own chapel in front of the same fortalice, holding the infant Jesus in his arms. The Carlist battery under the niche returned the compliment at the very next shot, by scalping the round-head steeple-turret of San Mamès, and exposing him to the passing scoffs of all the children in the village;—"Go up thou bald head!" The beautiful wrought-iron thirty-two pounder, made at Seville of old horse-shoes, was struck in the under lip, during the same engagement, in a manner to illustrate most strikingly the advantages of its construction, combining as it does strength and toughness with lightness. The trees in the Prado of Campo Volantin were dimpled, pitted, scarred, tattooed, shaved, cut, curled and amputated in every known style of barber-surgery. To tell the truth, I only ventured amongst them at night; that favourite walk of Bilbao beaux and belles being a

very unhealthy parade in the day time ; but at night it was tolerably safe ; the only danger being that of stumbling over the lopped arm of a tree, while one's attention was attracted to the strange grimaces of the shattered trunk, grinning over head.

On the mountains, the waste of forest life and limb, was equally deplorable. In fine weather, and in the early part of the siege, they were merely cut for the purposes of fuel, so the consumption was comparatively trivial ; but when the rain and snow and Espartero came, everybody that had a bill-hook or a sword was up in a tree, cutting, hacking and maiming for life, to get door-posts, bressimers, rafters, roof-trees and thatch for their huts ; all of which I could jump over, down hill, without difficulty—if the bayonets did not stick up through the roof. The smoke passed freely out, and the rain passed as freely in through every part of these extemporaneous *caserns* ; but when the snow fell, they became at once most comfortably storm-proof, being weather-slated by the first shower. This was luxury ; and as there was not a tent in the camp, there were no invidious distinctions or jealousies. The nights were intensely cold before the snow fell, especially just before day-break ; but fortunately at that chilly hour, the military band of Bilbao (a very fine band it was) used to play its *adiao*, or some other appropriate and rousing tune ; when all

the hill folk would jump up and warm themselves by dancing to it. The Spaniards have a natural taste for music. Night or day, wherever they go, even if only three or four are together, one is sure to be found able to give out a marching song, another to sing a second, and the others to join in the chorus. The march of one of these merry battalions over the mountains, is a sight worth going thither from London to see. The rain beats on them—they don't mind it, but sing all the merrier, as if like ducks, they rejoiced in the drops. One fellow carries the soup cauldron of the company, and is obliged to stop occasionally to lighten his load by spilling out the rain. Many have taken off their coats, and slinging them across their breast, leave their backs exposed, and thus face the storm. The sleeves are thereby untenanted, but the Carlist loves his musket as if it was an arm of his body; so he thrusts the butt and lock up into the sleeve, and jogs on, a comical figure, as if he held up his elbow in defiance or derision of the clouds that drenched him. "There goes an officer without a sword! How happens that?" "O, he broke it in the last assault on San Agustín; but he's going into battle, and he'll soon find another!" One happy national trait counterbalanced a hundred wants, grievances, difficulties and misfortunes,—nobody grumbled; everybody was patient, struggled on and hoped

for better times. There was seen a spirit approaching closely to what Englishmen would consider levity in the midst of the most important affairs. The soldier had his joke on everything and everybody, and often sang it extempore "for the amusement of the Company," and "it caused a great laugh at the time," as Mathews used to say. Whilst Espartero was cannonading the Carlists across the Ria Asua (the first time,) sportsmen on the opposite hills were popping at hares and woodcocks, and knocking them down with *Viv' el Rey!* It was amusing to see how quietly the horses and mules who had never been hit, grazed amidst the cannonnade; merely smelling the clouds occasionally, and remarking to one another that these mountains were very thundery! The riders too seemed as unconscious or casehardened as their cattle, and would scarcely interrupt their smoking or joking to get out of the way of a Christino cannonade. I confess I thought myself rather in danger at first, but a little experience soon set my nerves right, and convinced me that I ran as much (or as little) risk in one place as in another, so I never afterwards denied myself the amusement of hunting cannon balls to cover, with the rest. It was otherwise, however, when the Royal English artillerymen began to crack Shrapnell shells on our heads two or three days before Christmas eve. After they burst, there was

nothing to be found on Archanda, Areagas and Monte de Cabras, but wounds ; and, although we were not aware at the time, to whose attention we were indebted for such striking displays of skill, everybody seemed tolerably satisfied that the only secure plan was to get out of their range altogether, and all who enjoyed any free will in the matter, did so accordingly. Lord Ranelagh in vain made light of the momentary arrivals ; inviting his numerous acquaintances to sit and partake of the Christmas cheer that Espartero was sending, as his compliments of the season, across the Ria Asua. No ! there was something too pointed (though incomprehensible) in the new Christino practice ; no deserters were coming to explain it ; and at last, all who were not on actual duty—even those whom I have seen, day after day, sitting smoking unconcernedly or promenading leisurely on the heights of San Domingo while all the town forts were cannonading them, or whom I have observed calmly facing, from morning to night, a guerilla fusillade on the hills of Castrejana, as a thing of less importance than a hail-storm—even they thought it better to smoke somewhere else, just round the shoulder of the hill, where the *cigarro* would not be jerked out of their lips by their horses' nervous start, as the fiery thunderclap came smack at their heads, and the splinters skelped along their quar-

ters, or rattled among their hoofs. Courage is very much an affair of sociability as well as of custom, in man or beast; and so, though no smoker myself, I speedily joined the good company at the sheltered side, where a hearty laugh welcomed the fresh arrival of every idler. Nobody thought of asking "Are you wounded?" but numbers inquired, "Did your horse escape?"—Such is a camp! Death is nothing;—a wound is a matter of course, to be borne with fortitude; but a good steed disabled is a serious annoyance: "*Carajo ! Demonio !*" 'Tis d—nably vexatious!"

The immediate vicinity of Bilbao also afforded very striking and instructive scenes. The following rough sketch of a spectacle exhibited in the suburbs of San Agustin,—transcribed from my note book, just as it stands,—may perhaps suffice for the peaceful reader or spectator.

December 19.—Scene 1. "The moon behind a cloud" (important to night-walkers under the walls of Bilbao). Half-a-dozen amateurs on a party of pleasure strolling along the quay from Olaveaga to the Campo Volantin:—Arrive at a battery thrown up to repulse any sally of the garrison.—Scene 2. The amateurs enter the Campo through an embrasure, astride an eight pounder,—promenade along the Prado, tripping over branches lopped by the town guns; also stumbling on the

stone benches. "Take care! Come away from the river side. They'll see you, and fire." "Let them fire! I'll not break my shins any longer in the shade of the trees there."—"Speak low near the water, the voice will carry across it to the arsenal." A fierce whisper from a house in the Calle Sendeca—" *Quien vive?*" Our reply, very quick, "*Carlos Quinto!*" A range of tall barrels, filled with clay, bars the way. "Turn in through this falling house—now out at the stable—up through the hayloft—down into the street."—Scene 3. "Eh! where's the next passage? We are at fault. The arsenal battery has knocked another lot of houses down to Eguia since I was last here. *Sentinella*, which is the way to the Church of San Agustin to night?" "*Por aqui, Señores.* One at a time. Step on the dog-kennel—over the wall—up the bank—under the hedge and across the ruins of the Convent." "Did that ball go through your *Boyna* or mine?" "No, no, neither! they're not firing at us at all." "I wish they would aim at us, and then perhaps the perverse balls would go somewhere else. What a heap of ruins! the world turned upside down, and the pantiles transformed to paving stones! A fine place, if one had daylight, to make observations on the strength and stress of materials." "Keep moving! get through this rubbish of the outskirts

of the convent, and you'll see something worth looking at."—Scene 4. The grand Church and a rousing *Faccioso* festival within. "What have we here? Alloway's auld haunted kirk, or the vault of the witches in *Macbeth*, or the fac-simile of *St. Rosalie's* aisle in *Robert Le Diable*? 'Tis a purgatorial scene of the finest glow, well worthy of a pen and ink sketch."—*Imprimus*. Nave, transept, choir, altar, pillars and side aisles lit up by watch fires—the roof destroyed in various parts by shells,—the sky and stars looking in,—a broad breach near the high altar to the N.E. Soldiers dispersed around the fires, singing, laughing and shouting; others heard in the upper galleries, and occasionally seen, as the fitful flame of fresh fuel springs up, or the flashes of the muskets reveal their positions. Sand bags placed in the choir, the organ loft and the galleries; behind these they blaze away through windows and loop holes at the town walls. Christino voices and muskets replying at the other side of the Cathedral-close, about ten yards across. Very abusive warfare heard through the roof, going on somewhere in the sky, in the region of the weathercock! One fellow mounts a ladder to exchange Homeric compliments at a high window. What a Billingsgate language the Spanish is! How admirably adapted for *recitativo a la distancia*! Not a syllable is lost on either side, even

amidst the fusillade. "*Viva la Reyna Gobernadora la puta!*" (Ping!) "*Muerto a Carlos Quinto el hipocriton!*" (Ping!) "The Urbanos have excellent lead in their bullets! See how perfectly they flatten on this pillar. But don't sit on that rubbish, most of the glass granades fall just there:—very ugly things. I saw the nose of one poor fellow, sitting just where you are, blown clean off by one of them, and his *cañana* full of cartridges take fire round about him at the same moment. Keep near the portal, under the choir. 'Tis the only sanctuary left. Your head's safe there. Then, if the grenade falls near you, look out for the shelter of a pillar. That fellow on the ladder will certainly be shot. Listen to him." "Tell me, you starvelings, what's the price of horseflesh in the town markets to day¹? (Ping!) How many of you have boiled your belts for broth yet? (Ping!) If you have strength enough left, throw me your shoes, and I'll pelt you with a ration of potatoes? (Ping!) How does the ounce of rice and half ounce of oil, and no biscuit *per diem*, agree with you as fighting diet?" (Ping! Ping!) "He's down; ladder, musket and all, clattering on the Bishop's

¹ Extract from the correspondence of the *Morning Chronicle*, dated Bilbao, Dec. 25:—"A list of prices of provisions has been shown me, namely:—Horse-flesh, 2s. 2d. a pound; half a cat, 2s. 2d.; an egg, 1s. 1d.; a fowl, £1. 1s. 8d."

“gilded tomb!” “Is he dead?” “Not he! There he goes, pursuing something with his gun. ’Tis a general chase!” (Bang! bang! bang! on the floor!) “What’s the matter, *Señor official*?” “They threw a cat in at the window, Señores. It alighted on the head of that noisy fellow and clawed him down. (Bang!) There—he’s shot it! away he goes up the ladder to fling it back.” “Ha! you sons of Moors, there’s a feast for you. There’s *Maria Christina Gato* again, with an ounce of lead for stuffing. (Ping!) Make much of her and stew her for a ragout; and take care you don’t die of a surfeit. (Ping!) We’ll throw you some *Ratos* for a dessert. They say *Espartero* is coming with English beef for your dinners; but he can’t find the way up the river, and the *Trincaduras* have lost their oars, and the pilots are sea sick. The *Chacoli* of Biscay disagrees with his Excellency’s digestion, and they have put on his night cap and put him to bed and applied twenty leeches to his big toe, but he can get no rest or sleep, with *Castor’s* noise at his door. (Ping!) Have a warming-pan ready for him when he arrives to visit the ruins of Bilbao. (Ping!) They say he sent to England for planks to mend the bridge of *Luchana*, and make rafts to cross the *Ria Asua*. Aye, the English are coming and so is Christmas! (Ping!) What’s become of the battalions of *Toro* and *Truxillo* and *Compos-*

tella? (Ping!) We never see any of them now a days. I took a pair of trowsers from each of them, and very thin they were! (Ping! Ping!) When you make another sortie, please to put on good ones,—(Ping!)—if you have any? *Guarda! granada!*” In it came through the window, a long train of sparks curvetting over the head of the hero of the ladder. “Run, my hearties: lend us a pillar!” “It fell very soft. Did it alight on any one?” “Now, silence for the explosion!” “It’s very long about it! Is Aprice sitting on it? The best man kicks it and says—burst!” “Bravo Navarro, take care of your toes!”—“*O la! ’sta Perro!* ’twas a dead dog with a squib tied to his tail!”—“Throw him back after *Christina Gato* for *raciones!*!”—“Now listen to the splendid chorus, *Viva Don Carlos!* which only wants the accompaniment of the organ (burnt) to produce a magnificent effect.” “Where does that passage lead?”—“To a very unhealthy spot, the outer barricade of the town towards the arsenal. Let us explore the other side.”—Scene 5. “What new purgatorian depths are here? and who’s that rising from the grave, with shovel and pistols?” “A miner: ’tis a new sinking; but hush! that’s a secret; we’re only waiting for five quintals of powder to blow that *Palacio Quintina* out of the *Calle Sendeca* into the air, and then we enter Bilbao. You may perceive how well our soldiers

abstain from allusion to it in the midst of their nonsense, lest we should be countermined a second time. Now hasten home to bed before the day breaks, or the silver tassels may be knocked off our *Boynas* as we round the hill into the Campo Volantin."

CHAPTER V.

ON the morning of the 20th December at day-break, we perceived that Espartero had commenced the construction of another bridge of boats; beginning at the east of the river Nervion, to which a great part of his force had already crossed in launches; but had left it unfinished for want of a sufficient number to reach across to Desierto. His troops, however, continued to march from Portugalete to the Convent during several hours, during which, all was activity on the mountains, preparing batteries to receive them. It was evident that according to the position they were taking up upon the hills at the mouth of the Ria Asua, they were intent on forcing a passage across it—either upon rafts or by mending one of the two bridges—Asua or Luchana. Viewing the latter as much the more probable, Eguia on the 21st advanced a twenty-four pounder from the inner angle

of the road under the precipice of Monte de Cabras, beyond the promontory to the shelter of an old powder magazine at the commencement of the causeway which leads directly to the bridge, a couple of hundred yards off. The same morning, about eight o'clock, a fire was opened by the Carlist mountain guns on a small black Spanish schooner and a couple of *trincaduras* that lay under Desierto. They replied, and a brisk cannonade was kept up all the morning; a Portuguese colonel of artillery had his arm shattered here. Previous to the fire, Eguia sent to the colonel of the first battalion of Castile, posted nearest to Desierto, to order a message to be conveyed to the Commander of the English brig-of-war lying there (*the Saracen*); requesting him to shift his stern out of the line of fire, as the Carlists did not wish to hurt his vessel, notwithstanding it had fired on them thrice. The colonel replied, with all due submission, that it would be quite useless, as the English would certainly fire on or capture the party; that they had received no provocation for their former fire, and that it would only be a waste of life, similar to that in the case of the *Parlamentario* sent to Bilbao. Eventually, no message was sent, but the colonel was desired to be on the look out, to receive any boat that might arrive from the ships, and explain accordingly. I could not

hear that the brig suffered any damage in this affair, or renewed her fire that day against the hills. The only notice taken of the cross fire, was hauling her a little out of the way—a movement which confirmed the Carlists in the notion that the British commander was sufficiently aware that they were not firing at him. Two deserters arrived at Banderas the same day from Erandio, miserably clad (one without shirt, cap, or shoes). Another from the Vitoria side, a sergeant in full uniform,—a very fine fellow, who would not take the offered (and usual) bounty of ten dollars, saying, “I did not come hither to receive money.” Twenty-five of the Royal Guard, good-looking men, and very well equipped, came from the same side a few hours afterwards.

On the evening of the 21st, Gomez and some of his staff rode to Olaveaga, summoned by the Prince Don Sebastian to assist at a council of war consisting of Generals Villarreal, Eguia, S. de Torre, Urbiztondo, Moreno, Goñi, P. Sanz, Elio, Guerguè, Joaquin Montenegro, Sylvestre, Sarasa, and others. Gomez is a fine-looking man, apparently about 45 years of age, robust and rather broad-shouldered, with calm intelligent blue eyes, light brown hair and a clear English complexion,—the least resembling a Spaniard, or one whose talent lay in rapid marching, of any I had seen in authority in

Spain. The subject of discussion in the council was understood to be, the propriety of attempting to take Bilbao by storm. The question was decided in the negative—the general opinion being that the garrison could not hold out many days in the absence of supplies, and that if Espartero was obliged to retreat a fourth time, Bilbao would at once surrender in despair. It was known also that the opinion of Don Carlos was much opposed to the plan of proceeding by assault, on the grounds of compassion for the inhabitants, whose prolonged and energetic resistance had considerably irritated the besiegers;—so the motives of humanity and policy both tending to the same conclusion, it was readily adopted, and the council unanimously agreed to abide the issue of the contest about to commence on the banks of the *Ria Asua*. Gomez returned to Orduña next morning for his troops, and took up a position with his infantry to strengthen the left of the Carlist line of defence over *Burseña* and *Castrejana*. His cavalry were sent across the river to the valley of *Asua*, to be in readiness to act against those of *Carandolet*, if they should again attempt to take possession of the plains on that side of *San Domingo*. He was now safely at home again among the hills, where his pursuers did not dare to follow him,—knowing that he could safely turn and stand and bid them defiance. His force in cavalry

was thrice as great as that which accompanied Espartero; and it was confidently anticipated that if another opportunity occurred similar to that which was lost at Asua on the 5th December, the lancers who had followed him from Andalusia and Algarves would turn it to such good account, that the war would end for the winter by the establishment of *Cuartel Real* in Bilbao.

Monte Areagas now became the scene of active operations, and the head-quarters of the besiegers of Bilbao—themselves besieged in the mountains. It is the highest point on the northern extremity of the range of San Domingo and Archanda, directly opposed to the heights of Ondis and Erandio occupied by the Christinos, and separated from them by the ravine in which the Ria Asua flows east and west. When the tide is in, this little estuary is impassable even by cavalry; but at the ebb, children walk across at the village of Asua half a mile to the east in the plain. The latter was the point of attack on Espartero's last visitation; but the loop-holed walls and trifling breastworks thrown up on its southern bank by the Carlists, sufficed to arrest the progress of his column, 12,000 strong. His reliance in the renewed attack, seemed to be on artillery, and certainly there appeared to be a great improvement in that branch of his service. On the morning of the 22nd, he opened a fire of fifteen

pieces across the Ria against the Carlist artilleros on Monte Areagas and its lower hills to the west adjoining Monte de Cabras, where the little Ria disembogues into the Nervion. Their practice was very superior to their former efforts. The granades burst right over the Carlist guns, apparently within two or three yards, and at each shot, those at a distance supposed that some must be killed or wounded. But no!—the artilleros were alive and at work again, and, strange to say, not a man was wounded on the hills that morning, although the Christinos kept up a brisk fire for two hours at them. This was perhaps to be attributed to the Carlist practice of firing with single guns, selecting the best position for each, and working with as few men as possible. Had there been a grand battery and a crowd, the Christino shells must have done mischief. The Carlist twenty-four pounder on the road behind the broken bridge of Luchana, was firing all day at the encampment on the heights of Ondis. The Christinos there replied with shells, and those in the convent of Desierto with a thirty-two pounder. The latter had considerably the advantage in point of position, as well as calibre, and the shot and shells struck very closely. In the course of the morning a *trincadura* came up with the tide from the lower side of the Convent, and sent three or four Congreve rockets at the twenty-

four pounder. As soon as this gun was brought to bear on the water, the little vessel prudently put her helm about, and we saw no more of her.

The weather had now grown very misty, and for the last three days it was with difficulty that distant operations could be discovered. We could however perceive on the 22nd, that the Christino bridge of boats was completed, and lay beyond the Carlist cannonade, behind the high promontory of Desierto. We could also see that Espartero kept all his forces on the heights, where his right rested on the precipitous quarries of Aspe, with the Ria Nervion beneath; his left over Erandio (the Carlists occupied the village, and all the plain beyond); and his rear on Lexona and Algorta. The Carlist posts were advanced on the right to the height of Umbe, beyond Luchoa and Sondica. Their left extended across the river and valley of Bilbao, to the bridge of Castrejana; but all operations were confined to its right bank until the morning of the 23rd, when a detachment from Desierto threw a bridge of boats across the little estuary, (the Ria Galinda,) and passed over, as they twice before had done, to Baracaldo and Burseña. Their immediate object was the occupation of a couple of houses under the heights of Routegui, at the confluence of the Rias Nervion and Salcedon, and thereby to flank the Carlist twenty-four

pounder planted in front of the promontory of Monte de Cabras, which guarded the bridge of Luc-hana, and swept the causeway and heights beyond, to the great annoyance of Espartero. This they effected without opposition, as the Carlists were only on the south of the Ria Salcedon. The Christinos then blazed away from doors and windows at the artilleros who worked the gun, and the result was that the Carlists were obliged to withdraw it, having neglected to take the precaution of placing a parapet on the river's brink to their left, for its protection. This unfortunate movement left the causeway open to the Christinos; and was one of the principal causes of their subsequent triumphal entry into Bilbao on the 25th. Their success in this quarter led to renewed efforts: two guns were brought out of Desierto, and planted on the heights of Baracaldo and Routegui, whence they threw shrapnell-shells against Monte de Cabras and also tried to cover a new attempt to throw their pontoon bridge over the Ria Salcedon to the Baya of Saroza, and so march along the Ria Nervion to Bilbao. To counteract this movement, Gomez brought down his men to the quarantine ground, and lined the levées and parapets at the water's edge; so that the Christinos effected nothing further on the left of the Nervion, and again turned their attention towards the right, where their fifteen guns were already established.

Eguia on his part planted three 16-pounders in addition, on the central height of Monte Areagas, and a brisk exchange of shot and shells took place on the 23d and 24th.

Winter at last set in, with an intensity that left no doubt of the matter in either camp. The hills were enveloped in heavy mists that carried still heavier showers, varied occasionally by snow and hail storms, and by thunder that silenced the cannonade:—all driving in from the Bay of Biscay with a cutting northerly breeze which sometimes singularly intermitted its severity and allowed one to enjoy an autumnal relaxation of half-an-hour—just to enable all concerned to appreciate its searching influence throughout flesh, blood and bone the minute after. The Carlist forces were tolerably well housed. The artillery and advanced posts, indeed, suffered considerably, having only rude huts of their own hasty construction to shelter them; but all the infantry not actually on duty enjoyed at least “good dry lodging” at night. This phrase (which stares a traveller through Ireland, in the face, one-hundred times a-day, outside as many hovels, as he crosses the country) is intended to assure him that he will find nothing to eat or drink within; but in the camp before Bilbao, (although the Basque soldiers can live on very little, and do without pay month after month) their

rations were luxury to what the Irish peasant contrives to subsist on. They have white wheaten bread and meat every day, with fish and *alubias* (the small white beans of the provinces) to compensate for occasional deficiencies of beef. The Christino troops I believe, were much worse off, except in the article of clothing (although one deserter came from their camp on the 21st, without cap, shirt, shoes, or even sandals, yet the majority were excellently clad). A *parlementa* took place the 22d across the Ria Asua, in which the Carlists showed their white bread, and challenged their opponents to do the same; but the Christinos, having only ammunition biscuits, prudently declined the exposure, although they assured the Carlists "they could if they would."

These parleys frequently occurred in the pauses of conflict, and indicated a considerable change for the better in the conduct of this savage war. The persevering mercy exhibited by the Carlists in their successive advantages before Bilbao, was attended with the good effect of making an impression on the mass of the Christino troops, although their legislators in Madrid appeared to be proceeding in as sanguinary a spirit as ever. I was a spectator of the amicable rencontre of the 22d, and was highly gratified by the good manners displayed on both sides. It was commenced by

a Christino officer walking down unarmed from their batteries on the heights of Erandio on the extreme left of their position, to the banks of the Ria Asua, and hailing a Carlist officer who was posted with his company behind the levée which bordered a little peninsula, formed by a sweep of the Ria towards the Christino camp; a very strong position which the Carlists had occupied to great advantage in the previous battle on the 5th. The Christino began the conversation by declaring, that the English and French were both laughing at them as uncivilized partisans who could not lay by their hostility for a moment, and talk about the weather and the news of the day, like other people. The Carlist replied, that he desired nothing better; so they chatted about their rations and their acquaintances and the news from Andalusia, and who was killed and wounded, and all that: they spent a sociable half-hour together—the numbers augmenting, on the Christino side to about twenty (all artilleros), and on the Carlist to at least 150. I did not hear a loud word. The officers had the principal share of the conversation to themselves, but the *soldados* could not repress their propensity to have a joke with each other. The Carlists asked whither the new comers were going? The Christinos begged leave to inform them, they were on their way to visit Bilbao, to spend their Christmas

there—with their permission? The Carlists politely pointed out the shortest route, where they might swim across; but the travellers preferred taking the trouble of mending their bridges for them. Both agreed in cursing the weather although it came with *los dias de la Natividad*, and in wishing that the war was settled for the winter by one decisive battle. The roads had become execrable in the mountains. I could not imagine their depth till the 23d, when my mule stuck fast in one, as I was crossing out of the way of the shells. Gomez declared that, bad as the roads were in the Sierra Morena, they were still better than the paths of Banderas. Yet a train of eight or ten mules whirled the artillery up and across them in the most astonishing style. When there was time to spare, from six to sixteen oxen plodded along through every obstacle, slowly and surely; but while the Christino shells were flying in every direction, not a moment could be lost; although the wind, hail or snow in direct opposition, often rendered it almost an impossibility to transport the heavy guns to the heights.

The season was indeed most untimely for mountain operations, and we all felt confident that the Christinos, exposed as they were, could not possibly stand it another day; but would either retreat in despair to the shelter of Desierto and

Portugalete again, or make a desperate effort to force their way to Bilbao. Villarreal was determined to have the first blow, and at 9 o'clock on the morning of the 24th, marched by the bridge of Asua to attack them. The Carlist forces descended the hills in three columns, intent on storming the position taken up by Espartero on the heights of Erandio. Brigadier General Guerguè led the right, Goñi the centre, and Pablo Sanz the left. Soon after they had passed Asua and the right wing had commenced the attack,—the snow storm which had only threatened and sprinkled before, came on with violence, driven by a wind of piercing chilliness, right into their faces, so that they could not see their way. The bridge of Asua which had been only temporarily repaired with planks, afforded but a slippery and dangerous passage. Several fell into the Ria beneath. Amongst others, Colonel Ivarola, whose horse slipped off, hurting him severely in the fall, and finally drowning him ere he could be extricated. The movement was of necessity countermanded, and all returned to the mountains. (*Vide Appendix C.*)

CHAPTER VI.

DURING the attack on the Christino position at Erandio on the morning of the 24th, the bridge and causeway at Luchana on the extreme left of Villarreal's line, to the east of the Ria Nervion remained unguarded; and whilst the great majority of his forces were collected at the extreme right, awaiting a fine hour to recommence the attack on the opposite heights, the Christinos took advantage of the thick snow-storm to make a lodgement on the bridge of Luchana and causeway beyond. Their launches and *trincaduras* came sweeping up about four o'clock, unperceived¹ in the snow-storm, and landed men, planks, &c. to mend the bridge; then briskly cannonaded the advanced guard in the old powder magazine at the Carlist end of the causeway where the twenty-four-pound gun had

¹ Vide Col. Wylde's Report, Appendix F.

stood. The river battery, to which it had been moved in the rear, replied, but the Christinos on the causeway could not be touched thereby. They rushed on, took possession of the advanced guard-house, and thus opened the road for others to follow up the advantage and obtain a footing on the hills. Their reinforcements, on the watch for their success, speedily arrived over the mended bridge, or beside it, on rafts prepared and arranged there (as we afterwards learnt) by the sailors of the *Saracen* and *Ringdove*. The Carlists, who were concentrated on the Asua side, nearly two miles off, could not possibly arrive in time to repulse them at the available moment. Emboldened by the success of their surprise, the Christinos next marched round the point of the promontory of Monte de Cabras, and advanced to seize the twenty-four and eight pounders in the river battery abovementioned. At this instant, Lord Ranelagh and Lieut. Bell (one of the English volunteers, who arrived on the 6th December) entered the battery, having run thither from Olaveaga at the first sound of the cannonade. The guard consisted of between thirty or forty men who cheerfully obeyed the call of the gallant volunteers, followed them along the narrow road, and drove back the assailants round the promontory. This was a doubly hazardous exploit, for the entire line of the road was exposed

to the fire of a division of the troops of Gomez, who were placed on the shore of the opposite Baya of Saroza—an excellent position for flanking the road—but, in such weather, amidst storm and darkness they could not possibly discriminate between foes and friends. It was only after the latter heard the bullets whizzing amongst them, and made themselves hoarse shouting across the water, “*Viva Carlos Quinto!*” that the friendly fire ceased. The little Carlist party had now made their way through both fires and against the snow-storm, within view of the captured guard-house. The English *Caballeros* still shouted “*Vamos! a la bayonetta!*” intent on retaking it, but the *trin-caduras* were right opposite, blazing at them. The officer of the company declared that he could not allow his men to go forward, “being stationed as a reserve:”—and, in fine, Lord Ranelagh and Lieut. Bell found themselves fighting the gun-boats and “the Column” (as the Carlists term the mass of Christinos usually brought against them) with five men at their back—and wisely retired to the battery. At such moments, battles are won or lost. The Christinos won this time.

The “Column” now arrived across the mended bridge, fought its way step by step all night up the hills of Monte de Cabras and Archanda, bravely opposed by the scattered and unprepared Carlist

guerillas, who it was believed (by their Generals) were sufficiently numerous to hold any force in check till morning, when a formal attack was intended. The Carlists however soon discovered that it was something serious, and an energetic effort was made about nine o'clock to repulse the attack, but without success. A second and a third attempt were made about midnight to dislodge the assailants from two houses they had taken possession of half-way up the hill, between the river and fort Banderas; but all failing, in consequence of the continual arrival of reinforcements, the besiegers were at length undeceived, and found, too late, that the enemy had passed the bridge and ascended the heights in force sufficient to scatter before them the few opponents who overhung their path;—and ere the Carlist generals could form their battalions in any thing like an efficient order of battle, to withstand the assault, they were out-flanked, and obliged to retreat from Banderas leaving fifteen pieces of cannon, with all their acquisitions and Bilbao itself in the hands of Espartero. An hour before day-break, the troops on the Archanda hills, having actually fired away all their ammunition, retired along the ridge of San Domingo; the infantry to Galdacano and Zorrosa, on the road to Durango; and the artillery to Guernica, by the Munguia route. The troops

under Gomez and Count Mortara, on the far side of the Ria, in Saroza, Castrejana and San Mamès, got safely off before day-break to Alonsotegui;—thence to Llodio and Miravalles, and joined the army at Zornosa. The retreat was made in the best order, in silence, and in a style far from desponding. The men would have been just as ready to fight the hour afterwards, if they had been supplied with ammunition. But Espartero pushed on—or as it now appears *was pulled out of bed and pushed on* by his English friends; and gained his point of throwing succours into Bilbao.

This misfortune arose, in a great degree, from the unequal distribution of the Carlist forces on that occasion, the weak guard of thirty or forty men left at the advanced guard-house and its battery, under Monte de Cabras, and the very inefficient works erected and precautions taken for the defence of such important positions. Only one of the three arches of Luchana bridge was broken down; no parapet was built, or trenches dug to obstruct the passage of troops along the causeway when once the bridge was rendered passable by planks;—an operation that was rather favoured by the shelter of the remains of the loophole fort at the Carlist side of the bridge. Neither were any trenches dug, or stockades planted at the point of the precipice of Monte de Cabras, which completely

commanded the causeway, where a junction existed between road and mountain so slight, that it was a mere path through a gap in the causeway-wall, passing under the eaves of the advanced guard-house. It could, with the slightest precaution, have been rendered impregnable;—admitting as it did of only a single man at a time. Again, the twenty-four pounder stationed at this guard-house (the old powder magazine) for the defence of the bridge and road, was left unprotected on its river flank by casks or fascines; so that, when the Christinos took possession of the houses on the opposite bank, and filled them with sharpshooters, the artilleros were obliged to retreat with their gun to the river battery in the rear. The bridge, the causeway and entrance to the mountains were from that moment left defenceless. The force under Gomez in the Baya of Saroza at the opposite side of the Nervion might perhaps have turned the tide of battle if they had been provided with any means of crossing over to the scene of action; but the nearest of the two bridges of boats which Eguia had constructed over the river at Olaveaga, was above a mile distant from the point of attack; and Gomez' troops could only fire in the dark across the water at their friends and enemies alike.

Colonel Americ fell on the Christino side in this attack, and Colonel Carmora on the Carlist. The

latter was brought on horseback to the house of General Eguia, at Banderas ;—but he died at the foot of the staircase. Others, seriously wounded, lay on the floors and passages, unable to descend the hills to the hospital at Olaveaga ; 132 were however received there by the surgeons during that night and the previous day (of these a few were Christino prisoners) of which 111 had been wounded after the bridge was forced in the evening. The majority were but slightly injured, and their wounds being fresh, contrived to escape across the bridge of boats to the other side of the river, and join Gomez in his retreat ere the Christino lancers came dashing on. The surgeons Obrador, Garcia and Tristan also escaped at the last moment, together with several of their patients, among whom were General Pablo Sanz (who was wounded in the morning), Colonel Riente, Colonel Silva, Commandante Muños of the artillery, who was wounded in the head (the second time during the siege), and Captain Bessieres. The latter had on the 23rd been struck by lightning in Fort Banderas, which is indeed a most liable position, standing seaward on the brow of a sharp steep narrow hill, exposed to the first influence of whatever thunder cloud may sweep inland from the Bay of Biscay.

Several poor fellows who escaped from the hospitals having wounds in the legs, had to join

and support each other right and left, as they limped half clad in their bed clothes over the mountain snows, in a long and painful circuit, to seek shelter at Galdacano, Zornosa, or Munguia. Captain Vial who had suffered amputation of a leg at Olaveaga, had (on the arrival of Espartero's reinforcements) been removed, along with some others, for greater safety to Guernica. Count de Coetlogon, of the Engineers, who had been arduously engaged in his department all day and half the night, had lain down to snatch an hour's repose, and did not awake till the Christinos lancers came galloping along under his windows, when he fled for his life, on bare feet, across the bridge of boats, and over the snowy heights of Castrejana and Llodio, to headquarters at Galdacano. Don Luis Peseto, Ayudante of General Sylvestre, who was engaged to the last in getting the artillery and ammunition up the hill of Archanda, was taken prisoner, to the great regret of every one. He had particularly distinguished himself in the assaults on San Mamès and Burseña, to which latter place he had gone as *Parlementario*. He afterwards went on a similar dangerous mission to the gate of San Agustín at Bilbao, where he was wounded by an accidental shot. Another Carlist officer who fell into the enemy's hands on this occasion, was Commandante Trovo of the artillery, who happens to be

rather deaf, and slept soundly that night in his usual quarters in Olaveaga, after a hard day's work on the hills. As he was riding at day-break, up the side of Monte de Cabras to Fort Banderas, to relieve a brother officer, he passed some soldiers at the Capuchin convent, hastening down in uniforms that appeared rather strange to his eye, and much newer than what Gomez's weather-beaten battalions could be expected to bring from Galicia round about by Algesiras. But Espartero's troops were continually deserting, and these might be a company of the *passados* getting into quiet quarters out of the way of their old friends; so he hastened on to take his share in the expected battle, until an officer, also on the way down, told him he was a prisoner! "A prisoner! you're joking; who are you?" exclaimed Trovo. "General Oraa!" was the reply. In fact, the fight was over before the Carlists thought it was well begun, and I am surprised that more were not taken.

Baron Plessin, a Prussian officer of Artillery, and Lieutenant Roche, were left ill in Olaveaga, along with about fifty privates, wounded too seriously to admit of removal. Their treatment was the subject of deep anxiety to all, and from the incendiary mode of warfare usually adopted by the Christinos, and acted on the instant the Carlists retreated; we feared that it must have been very

deplorable. Scarcely had the assailants reached the house occasionally occupied by General Eguia and his staff on the heights of Banderas (and which, from its proximity to the fort and scene of conflict, had become a passing receptacle for the wounded and dying)—when they gave it to the flames. However, the presence of their English allies was probably a check on the indulgence of their tastes, and the prisoners received no further annoyance than what resulted from the hooting and pelting bestowed on them by the women of the town. I am happy also in the opportunity of stating that the wounded, who were found in the hospital of Olaveaga, were very well treated by Espartero. He placed a guard at the door in the first instance, and sent an officer round to assure them of protection; adding, that, if they wished, the Queen would receive them into her service. No response was uttered by the brave fellows; and to the credit of Espartero it must be told, that he further assured them that their fidelity to Don Carlos would make no difference in their fate. The books of the Carlist hospitals contained 730 entries. Of these about 400 belonged to the former siege under Villarreal, and 340 to the latter. Of this gross number 104 were artilleros. I know not exactly the number of killed in the November and December operations, but I am credibly assured

that the Carlists slain in the last night attack did not exceed 210 ; fifty of the wounded subsequently died, which made a total of 260.

The Christino accounts relative to the relief of Bilbao teemed with mis-statements. Colonel Wylde declared in his letter to Lord Palmerston, that they had taken the whole of the Carlist artillery, which in Espartero's despatch was enumerated at 25 pieces. The correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* asserts that there were twenty-eight pieces taken, and amongst them the monster mortar. The fact is, that the Carlists had latterly twenty-three pieces at the siege ; of these eight were carried safely off, the large mortar inclusive, (saved by the *Cura Merino*, who tackled his own horses to the carriage), and only fifteen were captured. Another "official account of the artillery taken at the siege of Bilbao," is published by the *Moniteur*. This estimate extends to twenty-four, which are all carefully specified, and includes "nine pieces of various sizes on the Baracaldo side,"—where the Carlists had not a single gun ! These were probably the pieces sent across the Ria Galinda from Desierto on the 23rd December. As to "the immense materiel," spoken of, we may judge of the real extent of it, by the fact that Eguia had, at the time the siege was raised, neither powder to spring his mine, long prepared under the town wall, nor to

keep up his fire of shells on the batteries; and, at the crisis when Espartero's troops carried the heights of Banderas, the Carlist battalions that guarded it all night, had fired away their last cartridge, and retired *nolens volens* .

The Christino losses were much more serious in this affair. The Correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle*, who entered Bilbao with Espartero on the 25th December, writes on the 29th, "The returns of the loss on the Queen's side are not yet made up: but it is calculated at about 900; of whom from 200 to 250 were killed. Among the latter was the brave Commandante Ulibarrena, who commanded the light companies *d'elite* during the daring attack on the night of the 24th. The Baron de Meer, and General Mendez Vigo were wounded, but not dangerously." The following extract from the same correspondence (January 15, 1837) gives the loss suffered by the Urbanos *only*, during the sieges. That of the garrison, must have been considerably greater. "An official return has just been published, by which it appears that the loss on the part of the National Guard of Bilbao, and the company of the neighbouring village of Deusto, from the 23rd of October, when the siege began (for there were but three days between the departure and return of the Carlists), —to the 25th of December, was 40 killed, and

154 wounded ; total 194, out of 800, or about one-fourth. Of the killed, seven were officers, and six non commissioned officers."

Although the contest on the causeway and the hills, was in progress from four P.M. on Christmas eve to four o'clock on Christmas morning, many believed it impossible that the Carlist position could be stormed, and some of my friends lost their baggage in consequence. All were in false security : even Don Sebastian remained within five minutes' ride of the enemy an hour after they had passed the bridge. The English amateurs had ordered a Christmas dinner in the Palacio Monteforte on the good old plan of "every man his dish," and invited Count Mortara, Count Boos-Valdeck, &c., to the attack. There were few "delicacies of the season" within our reach. Not a grain of flour could be begged, borrowed, or stolen for plum-pudding, apple-dumpling, or pastry of any kind ; nor could anything be discovered that bore the most distant resemblance to a plum. We did, however, contrive to muster a sufficiency of substitutes, and without doubt would have done justice to them if permitted, but the incessant peals of cannon and musketry on the evening of the 24th, engrossed our attention so thoroughly, that we all took to the hills (either to join in the fray to keep watch for the consequences) from whence we never descended at

the Bilbao side, although hungry enough before dinner-time next day. Lord Ranelagh, Lieut. Bell, and the son of Colonel B——, ran into the fight, while I, being a man of peace, ran out of it;—holding fast by my mule, which carried all my little baggage on the good old saddle-bag principle, and preserved it for me, too, with the exception of a few articles taken prisoners in the hands of my laundress. Keeping our backs to the fitful snow-storms that swept up and over the hills from the Bay of Biscay and the Christinos, we passed the night in comparative comfort and security—both occasionally getting shelter in Fort Banderas, or Eguia’s head quarters, adjacent, when the storm was “too bad,” and both (for we dared not part company) occasionally taking advantage of a gleam of moonshine to look down on the double line of fires which all night long came up the mountain nearer and nearer. At this elevation we were completely in the clouds, which, although saluting us on Christmas morning, were not in the least inclined to conviviality. A piercing arrival of sleety hail about an hour before sunrise, had sent me to endeavour to thaw myself, amongst the wounded, around the brazero in the General’s drawing-room strewn with beds, mattresses and palliasses, on which men, women and children reposed indiscriminately. Scarcely had I got into

a warm corner out of the smoke and the crowd, when a hurried order was heard in the stable below, and, as it were, rushing in a wind of troubled voices up the stairs: "*Adelante! Ellos vienen!*"¹—Instantly the sleepers, the weary, and the wounded started to their feet; all who were able, rushed down stairs and out of the house, carrying with them whatever little articles of clothing, bedding or provisions, their strength would enable them. I untied my mule, mounted, and joined the troops, retiring from Banderas and already on their route to Galdacano. The soldiers marched leisurely and in excellent order, in three or four single files, along the ridge of San Domingo. There was no running, no floundering,—not a voice heard. The only race I heard of was that made by an Alavese, who was taken prisoner by the Christinos in the conflict at Banderas. Having good clothes on, he was stripped of them in a twinkling, as a preliminary operation—and while his conquerors were occupied for a moment in dividing the spoils, he started off as naked as the day he was born, and escaped unhurt amidst a hundred bullets that whizzed after him.

A night march through deep snow and mire, was nothing to the Carlist Army. "They were

¹ "Forward! THEY are coming!"

used to it!" and nobody uttered a word of complaint. I never saw harder or more docile troops. It was, indeed, an extraordinary scene. A silent and continuous current of both sexes and all ages, passed lightly along the heights, bearing burthens of every shape. On the right, Bilbao lay sleeping in darkness, broken only by a great watch-fire in the Plaza Nueva. The Carlist sentinels had withdrawn unsuspected from Campo Volantin and the Church of San Agustin. Not a shot was fired, nor a shout was heard, although we looked and listened with some anxiety for any intimation of a *sortie*. But it fortunately happened that the garrison still reposed in the same belief that the besiegers had entertained an hour before—that the position could not be forced; and thus the latter escaped the necessity of fighting a second battle, *minus* ammunition and engulfed in the frozen mire of the mountain-sod;—a species of road which in many places could not have been made worse, cut as it was into ruts to the solid rock, beneath the wheels of the ceaseless train of artillery, ammunition and provision cars which had passed over (or rather through it) for the previous two months and a half. My mule's legs disappeared at times, and I thought that she carried weight enough without me; so I jumped off and plunged on before, till I discovered that mules, horses, and riders, more heavily laden,

passed me with ease, that my right ancle was sprained, that we were going slower than ever, and that the General's house was blazing behind us! This was enough. I found myself in the saddle again! the mule made a discovery that I wore spurs, and thenceforth walked through the slough with comparative ease. Villarreal ordered the 1st of Castile to our rear, to keep pursuers in check, but Espartero, astonished at his success, marched peaceably down into Bilbao, and the danger was over.

Descending along the high road to Munguia, on the eastern side of San Domingo at day-break, to overtake the escort of the Infante, Don Sebastian—I met about one hundred lancers of Gomez, issuing out of their night quarters in the farm-houses of the plain, and the villages of Derio and Zamudio; riding up to the scene of action quite unconcernedly, like people well used to counter-marches, and all that¹. Although in full retreat

¹ A few days before I reached Estella, a Lieutenant of Lancers, attended by his Orderly, fully armed and accoutred as usual, had arrived there; having come across the country and the Christino lines from Jadraque, near Guadalaxara, about 100 leagues, with a despatch from Gomez, announcing his victory over Lopez. I treated the story as a romance at the time, and did not mention it in my correspondence; but from the recent confirmation I received I now believe it, and can only account for it by the devotion of the great majority of the peasantry of both Castilles to the cause of the King.

myself, I stood in silent admiration as they slowly and singly rode along. Such another horde might be sought for in vain at this side of Caucasus! Their steeds were of all breeds and qualities, from the spirited and fine-limbed Andalusian courser to the Gallician sheltie. But the riders! How shall I describe them? Wrapped up in their endless carpets, cloaks or blankets, of every variety of pattern dyed or worn in Spain,—which covered the mouths, noses and even whole heads of several,—while their lance pennons fluttered above—they looked much more like natives of Asia or Africa, than of Europe! The Captain came on with a large shawl wound into a turban, between which and his blanket-cloak, his Copt-like eyes were only to be seen. Two or three followed, with silk handkerchiefs for head gear,—their dark eyes gleaming out of careworn hollow sockets, over very grim-bearded and sallow visages;—their black blankets rolled round and round their limbs till they formed a solid bundle on their saddle, where they sat, “all as one, as a piece of the ship,” (as the sailors say;) and at a little distance might be taken for old women astride, or witches with their long broomsticks, or anything but the soldiers they were! Next came a splendid fellow on a “bit of blood,” his spurs tied on his (almost) naked heels, (I think his spur leathers formed his boots,) with

his bare neck and head rising boldly through the hole in his blanket;—looking fiercely around with an air of reckless defiance, only to be paralleled by that of the Saracen's Head on Snow-hill. After him came a fellow without a cloak, a splendid Turkish bluebeard, white linen trowsers, and the cap of an English recruiting sergeant, ribbons and all! Then came Don Cossacks, Circassians, Armenians, Sierra Morenans, and downright troopers of Castile, bearing lengthy espadons almost reaching to the ground;—(one left-handed fellow wore his on his right),—and their heels armed with ponderous treble horizontal rowels, (fabricated for jingling on the Prado) which seemed as if they would stave in the sides of the lanky animals they came in contact with. Yet more! yet more!

"Tartar, and Spahi, and Turcoman!"

I might have indulged my curiosity till night-fall—but I was without a penny in my pocket!—a thought which made me hungry by anticipation;—so I rode on and arrived at Munguia, where I overtook Don Sebastian, who kindly gave me a cup of chocolate, and my mule a feed of maize.

At Bermeo, I found that Captain Collins had sailed, so I could obtain no more coffee: however, a friend on the road lent me a dollar, and thus armed both for the present and the future, I rode on

with a lighter heart to Guernica, where I obtained a very seasonable supply from Señora Calle, an apothecary's wife, to whom I bore a banker's order. I was, however, very near being obliged to depend on the merits of the dollar, for the lady neither knew me nor the banker,—the order being drawn upon her in mistake ;—but being assured of my identity by Don Juan Montenegro (who was residing there in consequence of the wound he received in the October siege,) she good-naturedly gave me half the amount ;—all she had in the house. I discovered afterwards, on my arrival at Bayonne, that she was indebted for the surprise to a mistake of my banker, who had been fairly puzzled by my address in Durango, containing the Basque name of a street in which I resided there, and which he cleverly interpreted as signifying the name of a person ! It was *something* “Calle,” or *somebody* “Calle ;” so he cut the gordian knot by sending me an order on Señora Calle, the only person of that name he could hear of in the provinces who had any credit in account at Bayonne !

I overtook Mr. Burgess the English surgeon, among the patients at Munguia. He had been attending the hospital at Derio in the plain, on the eastern side of San Domingo, and was thereby saved the necessity of such a hasty retreat as his

brother surgeons on duty in the hospitals of Olaveaga were obliged to make. We afterwards met at Durango and crossed the frontier together.

On arriving at the little fishing village of Mundaca, I halted for dinner at a posada where I had stopped once before in a ride round the coast, during a pause in the siege; and had furnished matter of infinite speculation and inquiry to "the daughter of the house," (a fine cheerful, intelligent girl, who ruled everybody within her reach, by her activity and high spirits,) for I was neither *official*, nor *ingeniero*, nor *medico*, nor *ecclesiastico*, nor *marinero*, nor *chocolatero*!—Nay more, I had not told her any news from Bilbao or sat down to my dinner till I obtained some maize for my mule; so I had become impressed on her memory as a very strange species of *viagero*.

I happened on this occasion to be the first who arrived in Mundaca from the camp, and Francesca herself fed my mule, that she might more quickly arrive at my stock of warlike intelligence. I did not like to be the bearer of bad news, and at first endeavoured to avoid her questions;—but she would not be evaded, and soon caught hold of the word "*malo*!"—then crossed herself and sat down as if thunderstruck:—then starting up, took me by both hands—seated me before her, and looking me straight in the face, insisted on knowing all about it!

I never was so cross questioned in my life. It was useless to attempt to cut the matter short, or endeavour to console her. She pushed aside a young Priest who was endeavouring "to catch the Speaker's eye" and expound the misfortune on theological principles.—"We are all sinners, you know, Señor?" said he: *Ergo ego,—ergo Carlos Quinto, &c.*"—I was examined on the tactics, topography, and chronology of the matter,—first in Spanish,—and if I did not catch her meaning, then at the top of her voice in Basquense. After I had proved my practical knowledge of the positions of both armies by sketches in the ashes of the kitchen hearth,—and told her the names of the fugitives following with the Infante—all her hopes of my ignorance or credulity gave way; she sighed "*Perdida la guerra!*"—then sat down in the corner and cried bitterly!

Her mother tried to comfort her and turn her attention to prepare my dinner;—sometimes scolding her heartily for being such a fool as to weep for what could not be helped—"as if that would mend the matter;" &c.—and then the old dame would go about her own work, wringing her hands unconsciously, or pressing them silently and forcibly on the top of her head, as if endeavouring to exclude a fulness of painful thought. The beautiful girl still sat by the fire, rocking herself and weeping;—endeavouring to fry some fish for me,

and occasionally chaunting a low recitative in which her feelings broke out. I could distinguish an extempore triad which ran thus; "O Vizcaya, *you* are lost ! O Basques, *you* are lost ! O Carlos, *you* are lost !" — Then followed the words "*yo ne—*" repeated several times with a strong emphasis on the latter. The phrase was trivial in itself;—the mere ordinary abbreviation of "I have *nothing* !" — yet fully expressing by the varied intonations of passionate mourning, the deepest sense of destitution and desolation. I never heard so much heart-felt sorrow concentrated in two words, and never before saw patriotism a passion !

The young Priest had not a word of consolation to offer, but stood in the midst of the floor with his arms folded, his legs astride, his hat pulled over his brows, intently regarding the leg of the kitchen table : — then starting to recollection, he threw down his breviary and bolted into the street.

Presently the neighbours rushed in, half shocked — half incredulous ! — but all highly excited, and anxious to learn the extent of their misfortune. What torrents of Basquense were poured forth as they urged Francesca and her mother to explain how ? — how ? — how it could have happened ? — Was it a surprize ? — or treason ? — or had *los Ingleses* landed ? Never did I hear words uttered in any language (save Irish) with such vehement rapidity, — hard,

rough, rugged and even angular as they were. It was not a flow of language :—the effect on my ear was more like that produced by a score of school-boys jerking stones along the surface of an icy lake, skir !—skir !—skir !—skir-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r !—for a furlong or more ;—while clenched hands,—darkened brows and blanched cheeks revealed the feelings which inspired it. My fish was burning all the while,—Francesca being the centre of intelligence around which every body thronged. She occasionally declaimed as energetically as the rest ;—then again sank into silence, hid her face in her hands—and wept. I heartily forgave her for spoiling my dinner, and felt infinitely relieved when she arose at last, dried her tears, shook her fine head, drew herself up to her full height, and proudly addressed me—“ You leave us now in our adversity—but come hither next spring, and you shall find us conquerors ? The Basques are not women or children to sit down and weep like me over the loss of their own Bilbao. They act—they fight—they suffer—but no matter ; they never despair or sink into slavery : they always conquer at last ! As sure as you sit there, they will lay siege to it a fourth time—aye ! a hundredth time if need be ! You have seen us baffled, and ’tis fitting you should see our triumphs too ;—so if you can enjoy a Basque victory, come to the camp next spring ?”

CHAPTER VII.

I ARRIVED at Durango on the 27th December, after a three days' ride over the snow from Olaveaga, and found *Cuartel Real* wearing an aspect of unfeigned chagrin. Don Carlos, perhaps, bore the disappointment with greater fortitude than any one, calmly observing when the news was brought to him, "Well ! if it be the will of Heaven that I am not to reign,—I can submit without murmuring."—Few, however, had this measure of patience. The officer who brought him the mortifying intelligence took to his bed, with illness caused by pure vexation, and was not able to leave it for a week. Every one seemed lost in astonishment that the surprise could have occurred ; and, strangest of all, nobody knew that the British ships, launches, sailors, and marines, were the principal parties engaged ! Villarreal drew out his report of the battle (*vide Appendix C*), without the slightest mention of it, though the fact was so important in

extenuation of his failure,—and on the 29th December he tendered his resignation. A council was held, and finally the command-in-chief was conferred on the Infante Don Sebastian. Moreno was named Chief of the Staff; Villarreal, first Ayudante, and Brigadier General Don Joaquin Elio, Private Secretary. His Highness set out next day for Galdacano, and took command of the army.

The Carlist troops had within the previous fortnight received an instalment of pay of half a month: on the 3rd January Don Sebastian disbursed another half-month's pay to all—both forming a small part only of what was then due to the troops, but which the poor fellows received thankfully, and enjoyed with a zest proportioned to the well-known deficiencies of the Carlist Exchequer, and the extent of their late privations.—However, the want of a better organization was universally felt to be indispensable, previous to any extensive and effective operations, and the Infante wisely gave his whole attention to the task—by no means an easy one—as the fact is, that the majority of the Carlist leaders have hitherto chiefly relied on the spirit and devotion of their troops, and looked upon discipline as a point of comparatively trifling importance.

The winter had by this time made itself felt with a severity that seemed to forbid all effort at moun-

tain warfare. The snow lay steadily on hill and valley for the first time since 1830; and as every thing portended a cheerless military pause, enlivened only by the everlasting gasconnades of Evans and Espartero, I prepared for my return, and joined a party of six, all English, who had happened to meet at the siege, and were now on their way to Irun. Amongst these was Lord Ranelagh, proceeding to winter at Rome, bearing with him the well-won cross and ribbon of the second class of San Fernando, the especial thanks of Don Carlos and the Infante,—and (what perhaps may be prized still higher, as a distinction to which few foreigners have attained in this contest¹)—the public testimony borne by his General to his bravery and merit in the field, throughout the trying period of the November and December operations before

¹ One of these brave and fortunate few, is Captain Henningsen, whose interesting "Twelvemonths' Campaign with Zumalacarregui" does justice to the merits of every one but himself. It ought, however, to be known, that after the brilliant affair of Segura, on the 3rd of January, 1835, Zumalacarregui harangued his victorious troops, and, expressed his high admiration of the gallant conduct of the *Lancero* Henningsen,—(then a volunteer in his guards;)—and hung round his neck a cross of St. Ferdinand, taken in the action;—the only instance I could hear of his decorating any one upon the field of battle. Henningsen's exploits in a hundred affairs, unmentioned by himself, were the theme of all who had served with him. His frontispiece portrait of Zumalacarregui is accounted in the provinces the best extant.

Bilbao, during the entire of which he acted under Eguia's own eye.

We left Durango on the 9th of January, 1837, and proceeded through Ermua, Elgoibar, Ascoytia, Aspetia, Tolosa and Hernani, to Irun. At this point, Lord Ranelagh, Mr. Humphreys, Surgeon Burgess and I, crossed to Behobie, and after receiving from the police authorities the *attentions* ordinarily paid to those whose passports are not *en regle*, we arrived safely in Bayonne on the 13th. We here found that during our progress an important event had taken place,—a change of ministry at Cuartel Real which promised to be productive of considerable advantage to Don Carlos in the progress of the gallant struggle he is making for the preservation of his rights, against the combined strength of English, French, and Spanish foes.

The laborious and heavily-responsible office of Universal Minister was abolished at the repeated request of Señor Erro himself, who found it impossible to get through the mass of important business that continually pressed upon him; and a regular ministry of four individuals had been organised instead; two of the functionaries being appointed *ad interim*, that not a moment's delay might prevent the adoption of a better system. In effecting this very material alteration Don Carlos addresses Señor Erro as follows :—

“Durango, Jan 10.

“Taking into consideration the reiterated applications which have been made to me to relieve you from the functions of my office of Universal Minister, which you have filled to my great satisfaction, I have resolved to accede to your request, and relieve you from this employment; reserving to you as a reward for your fidelity, your zeal, and your merit, your former place in my council of state. I have decided at the same time, and above all, to suppress the office of Universal Minister, which I created by my decree of the 20th of April last year; and that its several departments be confided to Secretaries of State, and of the Cabinet, which I have at the same time resolved to nominate to each.”

(Signed by the King's hand.)

“To Don Juan Battista Erro.”

“Durango, Jan. 10.

“Conformably to my Sovereign decree of this day, I name, viz. :—

“1. Secretary of State for the Department of Grace and Justice, and *President of the Council of Ministers*, the very Rev. Bishop of Leon (my present Counsellor of State).

“2. Secretary of State and of Finances, Don Pedro Alcantara Diaz de Labandero (at present

Honorary Minister of my supreme Council of War, and Intendant of the Army).

“3. Secretary of State, *ad interim*, for the War Department, Major-General Don Manuel Maria de Medina, Verdes y Cabañas (at present Sub-Inspector-General of infantry).

“4. Secretary of State and Foreign affairs *ad interim* Don Wenceslos Maria de Sierra (at present first officer of that department).”

(Signed by the royal hand.)

“To Don J. B. Erro.”

Independently of the beneficial alteration of system which the above decrees enforce, the individual appointments all indicate a change for the better. The first named is already so well known in England that little remains to be said, except that I found him as highly esteemed by all the enlightened and respectable portion of the Carlist inhabitants of the Basque provinces, as he is at our side of the water. He is a decided friend to a general amnesty, as a truly christian means of terminating this unhappy civil strife; being well aware how very much the extreme dread of an opposite course of proceeding on the part of the Carlists, has worked to defeat the progress of the King to Madrid. Whilst in the camp before Bilbao lately, I had an opportunity of observing

how a similar fear in operation amongst its Urbanos tended to retard the triumphal entry of Don Carlos. The deserters from it declared that every man expected to be shot if the Carlists forced an entry; attributing most savage intentions to Don Carlos, Eguia, and the Bishop of Leon—three of the most benevolent men, perhaps in Europe; and from my own observation, I should say all perhaps *too* kind-hearted to execute justice and exercise authority as sternly as it is requisite it should be, in such a country as Spain. But such are the erroneous opinions that obtain credence in civil war. A great practical advantage of this appointment—a President of the Council, is, that ministers can now proceed to business without waiting for the presence of the King.

Labandero is also a lover of amity and mercy, a particular friend of the Bishop of Leon, and every way calculated to work well with him in the administration of his most important department. He is a practical and enlightened man of mature age, who has had considerable experience in the time of Ferdinand, as Intendant of Catalonia; and is very popular in the provinces.

Cabañas commenced his career as a leader of guerillas in the war of independence, and rose to the rank of Mariscal de Campo under Ferdinand. He is upwards of sixty, has seen service, and is, or



rather was, a rich proprietor in Andalusia; but it remains to be seen into whose hands the proprietorship will settle.

Sierra is the youngest, the most active and the most thorough man of business of the four. He was trained in the office of the Foreign Department of Madrid, and has been engaged in similar affairs in the provinces ever since the arrival of the King. He was appointed first Secretary to Cruz Mayor,—was Secretary of Embassy to the Duke of San Carlos at Paris,—and has been virtually occupied as Under-Secretary of State by Erro. The other appointments are changes, but Señor Sierra's is a well deserved promotion. He speaks English fluently,—is as ready and punctual as an Englishman in engagements, and despatch of business,—(rare virtues in Spain, where "to morrow" is the order of the day,)—and has become an universal favourite with both natives and foreigners, by his obliging and enlightened methods of transacting the affairs of his office, of which everybody feels the benefit.

Considerable changes for the better in military matters were also taking place as we left the provinces, and the renewed hope and confidence which they inspired, were equal to a victory. So far from dreading an attack, the Carlists were even then intent on carrying the war into Castille, and

already making very effective arrangements to become assailants as speedily as the weather would permit. One of the most politic preparatory measures was the order issued by Don Sebastian, that all individuals incorporated in the different battalions of the provinces of Guipuscoa, Alava, Biscay and Navarre, who were not natives, should be formed into corps according to their country, preparatory to their march forward. All who know the extent to which the Spaniards carry their feelings of nationality, and the points of superiority in which each kingdom or province of the Peninsula claims to take precedence, will admit that a more judicious arrangement could not have been made for the removal of petty jealousies, the prevention of bad companionship, the creation of a generous emulation, and the establishment of that confidence which is a sure forerunner of success, by the banding together of friends, kindred and countrymen, "shoulder to shoulder," in the hour of danger. A friend, who was present at the first review of the new battalion of the Grenadiers of Castille, between 800 and 900 strong,—each man of whom had been a Grenadier in the Royal Christino Grenadiers—assured me that he believes them to be the most effective body of troops in Spain.

The army of Don Carlos indeed, underwent a very useful remodelling, under the surveillance

of Don Sebastian, who wisely looked to the organization of his forces before he undertook anything serious. He felt by experience the importance of good arrangements, and, I am confident, made great exertions to compass them. The official Aides-de-Camp of his Royal Highness by the new appointment, besides Lieutenant-General Don Bruno de Villarreal, late Commander-in-Chief, were Lieut.-General Count da Madeira, a Portuguese, who had served under Lord Beresford's orders throughout the Duke of Wellington's campaigns in the peninsula,—afterwards commanded in Don Miguel's service, and was highly esteemed for military talent;—Don Ignacio Cuevillas, Mariscal de Campo, formerly Governor of Saragossa;—Don Pablo Sanz, who led the expedition into the Asturias;—Colonel Count de Mortara, Chamberlain to the Duke of Lucca, and who distinguished himself so much before the gates of San Agustin in retaking a piece of cannon abandoned to the enemy at a critical moment;—Colonel Don Francisco Merry, *Gentilhombre de camara* to Don Sebastian, whom he had the honour of conducting into the provinces, and who formerly commanded the English Legion. Don Joaquin Elio, Brigadier-General and late Chief of the Staff of Don Pablo Sanz during the Asturian expedition, was appointed military Secretary.

The Adjutant-Generals of the Staff, (at the head of which was Lieutenant-General Don Vincente Gonzales Moreno), were Brigadier-Generals Don Carlos Vargas and Don Antonio Urbiztondo, formerly Chief of Villarreal's Staff, and a man of considerable tact in matters of discipline and organization; Colonels Don Juan Albelda, Don Ferd. Cabañas (son of the new Minister), Don Francisco H. de Cisners, Don Gabriel de Lacy (formerly of the Royal Guard and placed on the Staff of Zumalacarregui at the commencement of the war), Don Luis Puente of the Artillery, Don Antonio Arjona (a cavalry officer, possessing a high character for valour and ability) and Don José Cabañas, (also a son of the Minister.)

The first Ayudantes of the Staff were Colonels Don Elias Giron, Don Pedro Orue, Don Gabriel Gonzalez Zabala, Don Manuel Toledo, Don Antonio Campo, Don Manuel Mozo Rosales, Don José Gordillo, Don Bartolome Benavides, Don Julian Juan Pabea, and Don Ramon Vial.

The second Ayudantes of the Staff were Lieutenant-Colonel Don Roque Linares; Majors Don José M. de Sierra, Don Antonio Orue, Don José M. de Lasala, Don Fernando Tegeiro, Don Cipriano Fulgosio, one of the twenty-seven officers exiled to Porto Rico, who happily escaped on his arrival there, and who speaks English excellently;

Don Fernando Gonzalez del Campillo, and Don Alfonso de Barrez, a French officer of distinguished bravery, much esteemed by Zumalacaregui; Captains Don Antonio Ortega, Don José Fortuni, Don Roberto Roth, (a German attached to the Engineers, and a draftsman of peculiar talent), Don Enrique O'Donnel, and Don Ignacio Mazarasa; Lieutenants Don Fernando Arce and Don José Fulgosio; Ensigns Don Joachin V. Olazabal, Don Pedro F. de la Barga, and Don José Barros.

These officers were distributed amongst the various Staffs of the divisions of the Basque provinces and Navarre for the more complete establishment of discipline, under the improved system which the Infante was bringing about; and nothing was left undone to ensure the accomplishment of a very superior plan, with which the King or the Prince might safely take the field in the open plains that lie between Durango and Madrid.

A number of experienced officers and brave soldiers were taken prisoners in various engagements with the Queen's superior forces in 1836, whose assistance was most desirable; and fortunately, in the nick of time, (on the 15th January) Espartero sent a *Parlementario* to the Prince at Zornosa, to propose an exchange and restoration. It was immediately accepted, and 300 Christino officers and

privates, found in the depots of Atoun, Lascano, Marquina, Munguia, &c. were released. The English Brigadier Flinter, taken with Brigadier Puente and the Deputy Beltran de Lys, at Almaden by Gomez, were set free on one side;—Trovo, Peseto, Baron Plessin, &c. on the other.

Before leaving the frontier we found that the *levée en masse* decreed by the Juntas of the Basque provinces, was proceeding with a degree of spirit that promised most favourably. It was a favourite project of Eguia, and had been partially commenced under his auspices in May, 1836; but, on his removal from office, a complete change of system occurred in the War Department; and it was not till Don Sebastian had taken the direction of affairs, (unfettered by previous arrangements or personal considerations,) that this excellent measure was afforded an opportunity of developing the patriotic resources of the Basques. This force is not destined for active mobile service, but to undertake, as a local militia or national guard (or, more properly, a *Landsturm*), the defence of the province or *merindal* in which it is raised. The population, young and old, we were assured, were coming forward with promptitude and cheerfulness; for they perfectly understood the justice and utility of the measure, and the benefits that must arise to their country from it. They knew they could depend on

themselves, and they thought nothing of the sacrifice of time or money requisite to complete their individual equipment, and combined organization. I say, young and old, for the fact was that (except in the towns) there was scarcely a middle-aged man to be seen unarmed. Nearly all the *paysanos*, able to bear arms, were already engaged, either in the regular battalions, or as volunteers placed on the list for enrolment in active service. The new measure, which extended to all between the ages of eighteen and fifty, was therefore chiefly intended to afford the inhabitants of towns and the commercial population an opportunity of falling in, and contributing to the general defence, in the way best suited to their taste, and compatible with their occupations.

In all the above mentioned appointments and arrangements, the name of Gomez is not included. Shortly after we left Durango his conduct was made the subject of a Commission of Inquiry, of which the world has not yet heard the results. As few are aware of the nature of the charges brought against him, I subjoin the following enumeration, to which I can add nothing useful in the way of commentary, having no guarantee for the truth of the hundred rumours which came to my ears respecting them. His chief accuser is Cabrera.

“1. For disobeying his orders—which were, to

have taken up a position in the Asturias, for the purpose of aiding and preparing a movement beyond the Ebro, and for having extended the war to provinces removed from co-operation with the grand army.

“2. For having compromised Cabrera, Quilez, and other officers of Don Carlos, by inducing them to uncover the provinces of Catalonia and Valencia; the consequence of which has been that the Christians recovered much of their lost influence in those quarters, and were enabled to get possession of Cantavieja.

“3. For having given protection to many acknowledged rebels and avowed enemies to the cause of Don Carlos.

“4. For having plundered the inhabitants of the several provinces through which he passed, of large sums of money in the shape of contributions, without accounting with the commissioner who accompanied him from the Royal head-quarters, and without having brought to the King any considerable part of the said treasure.

“5. For having fled in a cowardly manner from the city of Cordova with 10,000 men, at the approach of Alaix with only 4,000, after having been enthusiastically received by the inhabitants.

“6. For having refused to engage the enemy in various places, though often superior to them in

force, and though repeatedly desired to do so by Cabrera, Villalobos, and other officers.

“7. For having in particular refused to fight with the Queen’s General Alaix, though all the advantages of position and numbers were on his side.

“8. For neglecting to establish a provisional government for Don Carlos in several places where the loyalty of the people was undoubted.

“9. For having abandoned several places where the name of the King was proclaimed, much to the prejudice of the royal cause, and to the injury of his faithful friends.

“10. For having by such conduct lost the lives of many distinguished individuals who have since been laid hold of and executed by the Queen’s party.

“11. And finally, for having returned to the Basque provinces with his troops in a state of insubordination.”

Whilst the conduct of this celebrated man is yet under discussion, and the political world hesitates whether to pronounce him a hero or a traitor, the following letter will be perused with interest.

“Guernica, Jan. 30, 1837,

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have remained silent for a long time, notwithstanding all that has been said out of Spain, for and against me as a commander-

in-chief of the expedition destined for the interior of the kingdom. The King, my beloved master, has deigned to order that an investigation be made into the manner in which I conducted that expedition; I feel satisfied the result cannot be otherwise than favourable, and shall with patience wait the decision of my judges. But a member of the French cabinet having, in the Chamber of Deputies, put forth as an argument that my return to the provinces was a proof of the little sympathy the cause of my sovereign met with in the interior of the kingdom, I feel called upon to break through my projected reserve, and to offer a few remarks on the motives which induced me to return.

“It is well known, and our enemies have acknowledged many times, that owing to my first operations in Andalusia, the government of Madrid was placed between two dangers equally redoubtable—the one, the rising of the south of the Peninsula in favour of Charles the Fifth—the other, the loss of the capital, should the royalist army on the banks of the Ebro advance. Without a sufficient force to offer an effectual resistance, the revolutionary government remained for several days in a state of stupor, not knowing how to act; but a great part of the Carlist army, having marched to the siege of Bilbao, and the fall of that city not appearing so imminent as the rising of Andalusia,

the government judged, and that rightly, the moment opportune for sending against me all the disposable forces that it could collect from Burgos to Cadiz. This circumstance compelled me to change my position in the south of the Peninsula ; but it is a fact, that I could have maintained myself there with advantage, if it had not been for the refuge scandalously granted to the column of General Ordoñez, on the English territory, the 21st November, at the moment my victorious troops were driving them in disorder before them,—and for the attack by the English men-of-war next day, on my first division, whilst in passing to Algesira it crossed the sands of Gibraltar. Although it may be said that, from those circumstances, my return to this province was not solely for the purpose of making my sovereign acquainted with the favourable disposition of the whole of Spain, yet it must be acknowledged that causes, not permanent and irremediable, controlled my actions, it being obvious that they were influenced by accidents which at a future period it would be easy to avoid.

“ Now, as to the feeling of the people in favour of the royal cause:—it appears to me impossible that it can longer for a moment be doubted, when it is taken into consideration, the facility with which I traversed the kingdom with only 2,700 infantry, and 160 cavalry, the whole of the force

with which I left the provinces of the north. I have occupied the most populous cities, and have kept the government of Madrid in the greatest state of agitation for nearly six months, although pursued constantly by different bodies of troops more numerous than that which I commanded.

“What could be more flattering to me, than to find that this phenomenon was explained, by attributing to me extraordinary talents? But I am not so blinded by self-love, as not to see that this praise was a trick of the Liberals to turn attention from the real and only conclusion that ought to be drawn from the history of my expedition, which is indeed a romance—a wonder to all those who judge after the rules of strategy. No; it was neither my genius which facilitated my marches so happily, or the want of activity or talent of my enemies. The success is due to the intervention of the people in my favour—to that officious bounty which provides for the wants of a friend, and hastens to offer it ere it be asked; the enemy, on the contrary, were refused everything, and only obtained necessities by force.

“There were many places which proclaimed Carlos V. on learning that we were within some leagues; at other towns I was compelled to entreat, to supplicate, that the people would not give way so publicly to an enthusiasm which, a few hours after-

wards, would be punished by the enemy with fire and sword. I do not remember a single village where the inhabitants did not bitterly lament the want of muskets, and the absence of arrangements for rising *en masse* in favour of our noble cause. These truths have been fully confirmed in the Madrid journals, and particularly by a letter from an officer in Espartero's army, who, in the month of July, thus writes from Lugo (Galicia):—‘But for the activity with which we pursued Gomez, he would at the present have 60,000 men under his orders.’

“When it is said that—‘for royalist opinion all Spain is Biscay and Navarre,’—I do not think that the feelings of the people in the interior of the kingdom have been well considered. In Biscay and Navarre the royalists are animated with glory, and thirst of vengeance often fully slaked; whilst in the remaining provinces, the feelings of the people are doubly excited by the violence and oppression which they suffer, and the complaints which they are obliged to stifle.

“The French minister, it may thus be seen, was not justified in the conclusion he drew of the improbability of the triumph of Carlos V. To all those who have attentively followed the march of my expedition, it must appear as if the war in Spain was the war of a nation against an army. If then the nation must succumb, let it not be said—‘a

people determined to be free, are free,'—but—'there is not a tyrant—the most odious—once in possession of power, who cannot maintain himself against all the efforts of the people.'

“MIGUEL GOMEZ.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER the first fit of vexation and despondency had passed away, the loss of Bilbao soon became productive of the very opposite effects on the Carlists. Hope, activity, the desire of retrieving lost credit, and of profiting by experience, seemed to inspire every one. The troops burned to avenge their defeat, and received the Infante with enthusiasm as an earnest of the increased personal interest which would henceforth be imparted to the struggle. It really seemed as if the reverses they had suffered were necessary to call forth the increased energy, unity and devotion essential to success. The following was the

PROCLAMATION OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE
INFANTE DON SEBASTIAN GABRIEL TO THE
ARMY, ON TAKING THE COMMAND-IN-CHIEF.

“Soldiers—The King, my beloved uncle, whose sole considerations are for your welfare, has conferred on me the command of the army. It is not for your General to judge the resolutions of his sovereign, but to prove that he has given you for a chief, a

comrade disposed to share in all your labours and fatigues. I have often witnessed your exploits. You will yourselves have an opportunity of witnessing my zeal for your welfare, and my efforts to terminate a war in which you are already covered with glory. Observe how your country contemplates your actions. Spain groans beneath the yoke of that atrocious, usurping, and anarchical faction which devours the prosperity of the country, tortures its victims, and by its impious acts, wearies the patience of Almighty Providence.

“Soldiers ! for you is reserved the glory of plunging this faction into the abyss from which it has risen. You have before saved Europe—you will save her again. You are the defenders pre-destined to preserve the throne and to secure order, by showing to the world what a handful of men can effect, and by exposing the intrigues of a vile ambition, entrenched behind the ægis of treaties. Never has a more glorious undertaking been reserved for the brave ! Confide in the justice of your cause ! The God of armies will protect that glorious mission which you have already honoured by your courage and dignified by your sufferings. A few more efforts, and victory, my brave friends, will infallibly crown your labours.

“The Infante Don SEBASTIAN GABRIEL.”

“Head Quarters, Galdacano, Dec. 30.”

It was confidently asserted by the Christinos in Bayonne and San Sebastian, that every opposition would be made to the new military measures,—that the nomination of the Infante Don Sebastian to the chief command of the army was not a popular measure;—that the march across the Ebro would not be supported; also that the juntas were opposed to the new ministry, and had hesitated in furnishing the army with men and rations. The following addresses presented to the Infante from the Junta and the army of Navarre clears up the point:—

FROM THE JUNTA OF NAVARRE TO HIS SERENE HIGHNESS THE INFANTE DON SEBASTIAN GABRIEL.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—By a royal decree, dated the 29th of December last, and which has been communicated to this royal Junta, we have been informed that the King—whom God protect—the beloved uncle of your Highness, has conferred on you the command-in-chief of his armies.

“The Junta is not able to express to you, Sir, the satisfaction it feels at a nomination which will form a memorable epoch in our history. You put yourself at the head of an army of warriors, at a moment when the inclemency of the season has dragged from its hands a glorious triumph—perhaps decisive. Your Highness is destined to lead our army to victory, and to consolidate on a firm footing military and religious discipline. You will show to

the presumptuous of the present century the real worth of high birth, and how far above base and ignoble acts are the princes of royal blood. The religious, military and political conduct of your Highness will prove to usurpation and to anarchy what can be accomplished by a prince, the first subject of his King, at the head of a few brave soldiers who are prodigal of their blood in defending the altar and the throne.

“The Junta of Navarre will do everything in its power to execute fully the order of our beloved monarch, manifested by the nomination of your highness as Commander-in-chief of his brave and loyal soldiers. The Junta puts itself at the disposal of your Highness, praying that the God of arms may lead you from victory to victory, until impiety be exterminated, the consolidation of the Spanish throne secured, and our virtuous and beloved monarch firmly wielding the sceptre of Recaredo and Fernando.

“God protect your Royal Highness many years.

“MIGUEL MODEL—JOAQUIN MARTCHALAR
BENITO DIAZ DEL RIO—JUAN CRISOSTOMO
DE VEDAONDO Y MENDENUITA—JOSE BE-
NITO MORENO—NICHOLAS MARIA IRIVAS
Y NAVAR—MANUEL MARIA VICUNA,

“The Royal Governing Junta of Navarre.”

“Estella, January 9.”

FROM THE ARMY OF NAVARRE TO THE SAME.

“MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,—
The allocation which your Highness deigned to address to the army on the 30th of December last, on taking the command in chief of the army, confided to you by the King, your well-beloved uncle,—has produced in the hearts of all Navarrese that enthusiasm which those who know their character alone can appreciate; and if, up to the present moment, obeying their chiefs, they have observed a discipline of which history offers few examples, their valour and firmness henceforth will be doubly stimulated by the honour shown to them by your Highness, in giving for them a leader the descendant of San Fernando and San Louis, endowed and distinguished for such rare qualities. Full of pride and ardour, the Navarrese will hurl into the gulph the monster who destroys property, devours man, and raises his impious hands against the Most High.

“Sir, *to whatever point the Navarrese may be required to march, they will be found by your side, requiring not the signal of the white feather of Henry the Fourth. The Navarrese know your Highness; they will accompany you always and everywhere, and their swords will form a circle round you in the hour of danger.*

“Receive, Sir, with that amiable kindness for which you are so much distinguished, this simple effusion, the language of the hearts of your soldiers, who perform more than they promise.

“God protect your Highness many years.

“JUAN ANTONIO ZARATIEIGUI,

“Second Commander General of Navarre.”

“Head-quarters, Aberin, Jan. 14.”

Similar addresses were presented to the Infante from every division in the army, and from the Juntas of Biscay, Guipuscoa, and Alava.

These assurances of loyal zeal, and a determination to risk every thing in the endeavour to carry Don Carlos triumphant to Madrid, consolidated the authority of Don Sebastian beyond all further hope of his internal or external enemies to disturb. It had been long and loudly declared by the *Christino* press, “The Navarrese will not cross the Ebro!” Their address on the instant, and their deeds in the fulness of time (10th of July 1837), have silenced their calumniators for ever.

The improved arrangements preparatory to the contemplated expedition now made rapid progress. In the beginning of January, the following new organization of the infantry received the approbation of Don Carlos:—

FIRST DIVISION—NAVARRE.

Under the orders of Major-General Don José Antonio Goñi, to be composed of two brigades.

1st brigade, commanded by Brigadier Don Tomas Tarragual, and composed of the 1st, 2d, and 3d battalions.

2d brigade, commanded by Brigadier Don Juan Bernardo Zubiri, composed of the 5th, 6th, and 7th battalions.

SECOND DIVISION—NAVARRE.

Under the orders of the commandant-general of that kingdom, the Major-General Don Francisco Garcia, and composed of two brigades.

1st brigade, commanded by Brigadier Don Fermin Repalda, and composed of the 8th and 9th battalions and Guides of Navarre.

2d brigade, to be commanded by the senior officer until a general be named, and composed of the 10th, 11th, and 12th battalions.

THIRD DIVISION—GUIPUSCOA.

Under the orders of the commandant of the province, Major-General Don Bartolomé Giubelalde, to be composed of three brigades.

1st brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Joaquin Julian Alzaa, and composed of the 1st, 3d, and 5th battalions.

2d brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Bernardo Yturriaza, and composed of the 2d, 4th, and 6th battalions.

3d brigade, commanded by Colonel Don José Ignacio Yturbe, and composed of the 7th and 8th battalions.

FOURTH DIVISION—ALAVA.

Under the orders of Brigadier Don Prudencio Sopelana, to be composed of two brigades.

1st brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Camilo Moreno, and composed of 1st and 5th battalions and guides of Alava.

2d brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Feliciano Elguea, and composed of the 2d, 3d, and 4th battalions.

FIFTH DIVISION—BISCAY.

Under the orders of the commandant-general of the province, Brigadier Don Juan Manuel Sarasa, and to be composed of three brigades.

1st brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Juan Antonio Goñi, and composed of the 2d, 3d, and 5th battalions.

2d brigade, commanded by Colonel Don Juan Antonio Berastegui, and composed of the 1st, 4th, and 6th battalions.

3d brigade, commanded by Brigadier Don Cas-

tor Andechaga, and composed of the 7th, 8th, and 9th battalions.

SIXTH DIVISION—CASTILLE.

Under the orders of Brigadier Don Antonio Urbiztondo, to be composed of two brigades, commanded by Brigadiers Don Carlos Perez de las Vacas and Don José Arroyo. This division is composed of seven battalions, the whole of the men of which have either passed over from the enemy, or have been made prisoners. It is intended to give each of these battalions a particular name, as was usual in former times. The first battalion, composed solely of men passed over from the Royal Guards, has been named "*Granaderos del Ejercito.*"

BRIGADE OF ARRAGON AND VALENCIA.

Under the orders of Brigadier Don Joaquin Quilez, and composed of one battalion of Arragon, called "Del Infante Don Juan;" second battalion of Arragon, called "Del Infante Don Sebastian;" and one battalion of Valencians, called "Del Infante Don Fernando."

BATTALION OF ALGERINES.

Under the orders of Colonel Crevinkell, composed of deserters from the French auxiliary Legion.

TOTAL OF THE INFANTRY OF THE ARMY OF THE
NORTH.

Navarrese	12 battalions.
Guipuscoa	8 „
Alava	6 „
Biscay	9 „
Castille	7 „
Arragon and Valencia .	3 „
Algerines	1 „

In all . . . 46

The effective of each battalion is to be, without delay, carried to 1,000 men.

All the officers' servants are to join their regiments, and invalids to be given to officers in their places.

The following officers have been appointed as second Commandantes of provinces:—

Brigadier Don Juan Antonio Zaratiegui, for Navarre.

Brigadier Don Pedro Iturriza, for Guipuscoa.

Brigadier Don Juan Antonio Guerguè, for Biscay; and

Brigadier Don Valentin Berastegui, for Alava.

The organization of the cavalry, (composed of nearly 2,000 horses,) was also in progress at the same time.

The battalion of Algerines was composed of

eight companies of well-disciplined men. The desertion from the French auxiliary Legion, and its loss on the field of battle, was immense since its entry into Spain. On its landing in Catalonia it was 7,000 strong; in the month of September, 1836, it was reinforced by 800 men from France; and at the beginning of January, 1837, its effective force was 2,500 men, with 500 in the hospitals. The treatment the legion experienced from the Christino government was infamous; it was left for some time without clothing, money, or even rations; and now, after two years' hard fighting, and the serious remonstrances of the French government, Mendizabal *has promised it* 30,000 dollars! Is it any wonder that the men desert and join the Carlist Legion, which is well fed and protected by the inhabitants?

On the 9th of January, thirty-one Algerines stationed at Olaque deserted in a body from their battalions and presented themselves to the Carlist Commandant-general of Navarre, and were embodied amongst their comrades in the new Foreign Legion assembled at Zornosa. Since that period desertion has gone on by wholesale. On the 28th January, fifty men passed at once into France, and the most recent speculations of the Parisian Christino press regard the Legion as virtually extinct..

As it was also known that amongst the Por-

tuguese Army of Observation were many individuals well affected to Don Carlos, who would, if opportunity afforded, again gladly follow the Count da Madeira to victory,—the King published the following decree, which I understand has already been productive of the secession of several officers and men from that Legion.

ROYAL DECREE.

“Persuaded, that by violence only, many of the soldiers composing the Portuguese Legion were dragged from their country and marched into Spain, to swell the ranks of the usurpation, and under the pretence of defending the rights of my niece, lend aid to the most cruel—the most devastating anarchy.

“I have thought the moment arrived for providing in my army to all faithful Portuguese, that tranquillity of mind which they lost the day they leagued themselves with revolution.

“I have, therefore, ordered,

“That all chiefs, officers, serjeants, corporals, and privates belonging to the said Portuguese Legion, who shall pass over to the ranks of the brave defenders of my just cause, do receive promotion equivalent to the force they may bring with them.

“All those who pass without followers shall preserve the rank they previously enjoyed.

"You will take the necessary measures for the due execution of the decree, ordering all chiefs and authorities to pay that attention to the strangers they so justly merit; and that all Alcaldes of towns and villages, give them protection and succour, should it be required.

"I, THE KING."

"Royal head-quarters, Andoain, Feb. 11, 1837."

"To General Don Manuel Maria de Medina, Verdes y Cabañas,
Minister-of-War, *ad interim*."

It was not until the 24th February that the War Office could find time to decide on the respective merits of the assailants of the Convent of San Mamès. Lord Ranelagh, satisfied with the public testimony of Eguia, and the cross already conceded to him for daily and hourly services amongst all varieties of danger in field and battery,—had left the snow-covered provinces for the winter; and did not interfere with the claims of the native *Señores oficiales*.

Now I recollect—his Lordship's name was not even mentioned in the report of the affair drawn up by Lieut.-Colonel Nigueruela, of the first of Castille, for presentation to the General:—for which the said Lieutenant-Colonel volunteered an apology to his Lordship half an hour too late—as-

sureing him that he would have inserted it, had he known how to spell it !—at which Lord Ranelagh laughed so heartily, that the Castillian was *almost* put out of countenance.

But to resume : the honour of first entering San Mamès, was awarded to Don Santos Fernandez Pintado, Major of the 2d battalion of Castille, (the survivor of three officers who entered the fossé) who thereupon received the order of the 2nd class of San Fernando.

Whilst the Carlists were thus awarding honours and organizing battalions for the renewal of the war in a superior style, the Christino Generals were employed after another fashion, according to their characteristic necessities. The following morceau, published in the *Madrid Gazette* in June last, illustrates the degree of discipline to which the Christino Army had attained, far more satisfactorily than any extraneous commentary of mine:—

“ MILITARY DISCIPLINE.

“ The general-in-chief of the army of the centre has published in an order of the day, the following dispositions, with the intention of terminating those disorders too frequent in the battles, and of which the consequences may be fatal.

“ Art 1. Every time that a brigade or a battalion commences firing, the Commandant-General of the

division, or, in his absence, the superior Officer, shall place in the rear half a company of artillery, and a piquet of cavalry, with orders to shoot any soldier, who, without being wounded, or furnished with competent authority for so doing, shall quit the field of battle.

"2. The Officers of any company which a soldier shall have abandoned, shall be suspended from their rank, and sent prisoners to some fortress, until they have proved that they took all necessary measures, and done all which depended upon them to keep the man at his post.

"3. The Commandants of battalions or Chiefs of troops, who shall be dispersed, or fly coward-like at sight of, or under the fire of the enemy, at the moment when they come into action, shall be instantly suspended from their rank, and incur the penalties decreed against them by a council of war which shall be held within twenty-four hours.

"4. During the battle, the most profound silence shall be observed. It is forbidden to cry, 'Forward, cavalry!' or to make any other cry which might disturb the good order which ought always, and particularly during a battle, to reign in the ranks. The man who makes any cry shall be punished as the competent officers may judge proper. The penalty of death may be applied to those who may have cried—'We are cut to pieces!—lost!—treason!' or any

other cries which may create disorder and cause the position to be abandoned. The Chiefs of battalions and Officers of companies who shall have heard or permitted a cry, shall be suspended from their rank.

"5. Conformably to the plan already established in the army of the north, and according to the temporary regulations here made, there shall be a company formed to carry away and take care of the wounded in each brigade; in consequence, no other individual is allowed to quit the ranks. This abuse having been tolerated until now, the third part of the disposable force has been sometimes lost in the midst of a battle. Every soldier who infringes on the present order shall be instantly shot, unless he returns to his ranks, on being ordered to do so by his Officer.

"6. As the ordonnance forbids firing without the orders of the Chiefs, they and the Officers of the corps will employ the greatest energy to avoid the accidents occasioned by useless shots. They will economise the munitions as much as possible, and will only permit batteries and entire companies to engage with the guerillas or isolated men, and never but within musket shot. These abuses discourage the troops, who uselessly consume their cartridges, which they ought to preserve for more decisive occasions.

“7. The Commandants, Generals of divisions, and Chiefs of brigades are responsible for the execution of the present dispositions, which shall be inserted in the order of the day of the army, and read before going into battle.

“CASTELLANO.”

Whilst on the subject of the publications in the *Madrid Gazette*, I may be allowed to call the attention of the reader to some singular statistical results established therein relative to the conduct of the present civil war in Spain.

According to the official statements published in the <i>Gazette</i> , the number of Carlists killed in the field of battle up to the 1st of April, 1836, is	280,535
From the 1st April to 8th October 1836.....	33,927
Carlist prisoners to 1st April 1836	54,493
Ditto to 8th October 1836.....	11,760

Total of Carlists killed and prisoners 380,715
 Muskets taken during the above periods, 113,221 ; battles gained, 597, which are further divided into 327 partial affairs, and 270 total routs.

This amusing foreign account may however be fairly balanced by a very serious domestic one, in which unfortunately there is no exaggeration. All is liberality and loss—waste and want. Lord

Palmerston will probably term our aid a charitable one. If "charity covereth a multitude of sins," his Lordship has cleared off a long arrear of trespasses against the honour and independence of his own country, by his unbounded benevolence to the Queen of Spain, viz :—

RETURN to an Address to his Majesty, dated Feb. 7, 1837, for a Return of the Amount of Military and Naval Stores, Arms, and Ammunition, furnished to the Queen of Spain, under the stipulations of the Quadripartite Treaty, and the Amount of Payment received for the same, by his Majesty's Government.

A Return of the Amount of Military and Naval Stores, Arms, and Ammunition, furnished by the Ordnance Department to the Queen of Spain, under the stipulations of the Quadripartite Treaty, and the Amount of Payment received for the same by his Majesty's Government.

FURNISHED TO THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT.

318,600 muskets, 10,000 carbines, 3,600 pistols, 10,000 swords, 4,000 rifles, 4,000,000 small arm cartridges, 19,856 cannon ditto, 938,531 lbs. powder, 35,209 chests and barrels.

16 iron guns, 12 iron mortars, 18 travelling, 10 garrison, and 12 ammunition carriages, 14,892 shot and shells, 19,320 fuzes.

Two bridges of pontoons, intrenching tools, &c.

One 18-pounder iron gun, six 18-pounder carronades, 30 muskets, 40 pistols, 40 swords, ammunition, shot, &c., for the schooner "Isabella."

Two 18-pounder iron guns, four 32-pounder carronades, 24 muskets, 24 pistols, 24 swords, ammunition, shot, &c., for the steam-ship "City of Edinburgh."

Six 32-pounder iron guns, 80 muskets, 40 pistols, 100 swords, 40 pikes, ammunition, shot, &c., for the steam-ship "Isabella II."

FURNISHED TO THE AUXILIARY LEGION.

15,000 muskets, 1,200 carbines, 850 pistols, 1,000 swords, 600 rifles, 5,608,000 small arm cartridges, 22,023 cannon ditto, 13,018lbs. powder, 11,429 chests and barrels.

26 brass guns, two iron howitzers, 4,730 Congreve and 350 signal rockets, 18,487 fuzes, 13,942 shot and shells, 90 carriages for guns and rockets.

45 waggons and carts, 468 sets of harness; 15 tents, with bedsteads, bedding, hospital dresses, blankets, &c. &c.

Value of the above:—

Spanish Government . .	£468,878
Auxiliary Legion . . .	68,200
Total value .	£537,078

No part of which has been received by the Ordnance Department.

By order of the Master-General and Board of Ordnance.

R. BYHAM, Sec.

Office of Ordnance, Feb. 17, 1837.

Return of all Military Medical Stores furnished to the Queen of Spain, under directions received from his Majesty's government.

Reference to the Secretary at War's Instructions for the Supplies.	Description of Supplies.	Value.	Dates of Deliveries of the Supplies to the Spanish Authorities.
DATES.		£ s. d.	
31 July, 1835	Surgical Instruments . . .	315 0 0	2 Sept., 1835.
8 Nov., 1836	Ditto ditto .	97 10 0	26 Nov., 1836.
3 Dec., 1836	Surgical Materials, &c. . .	159 12 6	13 Dec., 1836.
Total value, £572 2 6			

J. M'GRIGOR, Director-General.

Army Medical Department, Feb. 7, 1837.

A Return of the Amount of Naval Stores furnished to the Queen of Spain, under the stipulations of the Quadripartite Treaty, £969 15 0

168 DISBURSEMENT OF THE WINDOW TAX

Amount of Payment received for the
same by his Majesty's Government . Nil.

A Return of the Naval Slops and Provisions
issued from any of his Majesty's Victualling
Yards or Ships of War, for the use of the
British Legion, or any other Forces serving
her Majesty the Queen of Spain, and of the
value thereof £763 13 10

Amount received in whole, or in part,
by his Majesty's Government for the
same Nil.

T. BRIGGS, Accountant-General.

R. DUNDAS, Storekeeper-General.

JAMES MEEK, Comptroller of Victualling.

Admiralty, Feb. 15, 1837.

It would seem that, while the light of heaven is
taxed to the people of England, for the purpose of
meeting the exigences of the state, the government
is rich enough to throw away half a million of
money, to keep a dissolute woman on the throne
of Spain. Of course payment is not looked for,
nor can it ever be expected, as there are two con-

ventions now existing between Spain and this country—one of 1809, and the other of 1814—of which the former has never fulfilled her part—and in all probability never will.

The first item is composed of “318,600 muskets, 10,000 carbines, 3,600 pistols, 10,000 swords, 4,000 rifles, 4,000,000 small-arm cartridges, 19,856 cannon ditto, 938,531 lbs. powder, 35,209 chests and barrels.”—This is really the overflowing of good nature; for so abundantly have the Christinos been supplied with muskets, that they had enough to throw away in every engagement when they met the Carlists; and to arm, if not the whole, at least one-half of the insurgent army. On one occasion—the battle of the Amescoas—five thousand British muskets were picked up; and up to the 1st of January, 1836, it was calculated that about 57,000 stand of arms had changed hands. The truth is apparent; for every person who has visited the Carlist army, has found thousands of their muskets bearing the Tower mark; and it is a point of honour and pride with the Basque soldiers, to call the stranger’s attention to the fact, and tell him the fields on which they were so easily provided. This charity is, therefore, of an enlarged nature, and Lord Palmerston is entitled to the gratitude not only of friends, but foes. Had the supply to the Queen not been so overflowing, Don

Carlos would have been hardly able to carry on the war to the present extent.

As to the four millions of cartridges, and the nine hundred thousand pounds weight of powder, a great deal of that too has passed over to the Basques, either in the course of trade, or by having been taken in the several depots of which the Carlists got possession under Zumalacarregui. Louis Philippe is accused of keeping his frontiers open, but the real provider for Don Carlos has been the nobleman who has opened the Tower gates for his service. Next comes

“Sixteen iron guns, 12 iron mortars, 18 travelling, 10 garrison, and 12 ammunition carriages, 14,892 shot and shells, 19,320 fuzes.

“Two bridges of pontoons, intrenching tools, &c.

“One 18-pounder iron gun, six 18-pounder carronades, 30 muskets, 40 pistols, 40 swords, ammunition, shot, &c., for the schooner *Isabella*.

“Two 18-pounder iron guns, four 32-pounder carronades, 24 muskets, 24 pistols, 24 swords, ammunition, shot, &c., for the steam-ship *City of Edinburgh*.

“Six 32-pounder iron guns, 80 muskets, 40 pistols, 100 swords, 40 pikes, ammunition, shot, &c., for the steam-ship *Isabella II.*”

All these articles are still in the Queen's service, and there is little chance of their being passed over

to the other side ; but it is to be hoped that the crews of the steamers will not bring them home, and sell them for arrears of wages, as Don Pedro's proposed to do at Oporto. I trust that the noble Lord is prepared for such a probable exigency, and to assist her Majesty (of England) to arrest her own goods. It will be amusing to find the broad arrow clapped on alongside the Tower mark.

Then comes the supply for the British Auxiliary Legion, consisting of—

“15,000 muskets, 1,200 carbines, 850 pistols, 1,000 swords, 600 rifles, 5,608,000 small-arm cartridges, 22,023 cannon ditto, 13,018 lbs. powder, 11,429 chests, and barrels.

“26 brass guns, two iron howitzers, 4,730 Congreve and 350 signal rockets, 18,487 fuzes, 13,942 shot and shells, 90 carriages for guns and rockets.

“45 waggons and carts, 468 sets of harness ; 15 tents, with bedsteads, bedding, hospital dresses, blankets, &c.”

These articles are, no doubt, still in the possession of the survivors of that select corps, so prudently abandoned by their General,—with the exception of the muskets they threw away at the races of Hernani—though I fear they have occasionally sold their accoutrements for food or drink. Whether they will have a *lien* on the goods for wages unpaid, is a legal point which I do not argue.

There is one article liberally furnished and liberally used, which I do not observe set down, namely, *cats* for the men's backs:—an omission which ought to be corrected. The cost of the above is—

For the Spanish Government. . .	£468,878
Auxiliary Legion . . .	68,200
Total value . . .	£537,078

To which may be subjoined the very candid addition of the Secretary at the Ordnance-office, "that no part" has been received by his department.

The return is then graced by an account of medical stores furnished to the expedition, to the extent of 572*l.* 2*s.*, of naval stores amounting to 969*l.* 15*s.*, and of slops and provisions, 763*l.* 13*s.* 10*d.*; making the whole sum expended by the people of England for the services of Señora Muñoz, 539,383*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*; for which, in the expressive word of the official paper, the return has been "*Nil!*" and for which to the day of judgment, in all human probability, the return will be, either in gratitude or in payment, "*Nil.*"

CHAPTER IX.

THE sieges of Bilbao form such important portions of the history of the present civil war in Spain, that I feel confident my readers will excuse me for travelling out of the route I have hitherto pursued in my narrative ; which has been, to state only what I saw and heard, or what those on whom I could personally rely, stated to me as facts which they had witnessed. However, civil war draws so decided a line of demarcation between its parties, that nobody can enjoy the opportunity of seeing what passes on both sides. I am, therefore, compelled to resort to others' aid for the completion of my sketch of the operations undertaken against Bilbao, and feel principally bound to acknowledge the assistance afforded me by the interesting letters written by the Correspondent of *The Morning Chronicle* before mentioned, who remained in Bilbao for some weeks after the siege had been raised. His valuable observations enable me to continue the nar-

rative, and afford my readers a view of the interior of Bilbao relieved:—a sight, from which it may well be believed that *I* was debarred,—though I had till then enjoyed a fine bird's eye view of it from the Alto de San Domingo.

According to the official return, the loss on the part of the Queen's army on the 24th and 25th of December, was 87 killed, 597 wounded, and 30 missing; in all, 714. It is generally understood that the Carlist loss was much greater. The number of prisoners taken from the latter is 135, including seven officers and the commandant of artillery.

The Carlists only admit a loss of 260 killed and wounded, and 65 taken prisoners: probably the remaining 70 were not soldiers but suspected civilians.

The *Oñate Gazette*, 3rd of Jan., states, that in the late hurricane a French vessel was seen off the port of Bermeo in distress. Several boats proceeded to her assistance in spite of the roughness of the sea, and succeeded in towing her in safety into the harbour. She proved to be a lugger bound from Caen to Bordeaux, laden with corn, linseed and oil. The captain demanded leave to unload his cargo, in order to repair the damage done to his vessel. Don Carlos not only gave his permission, but ordered every assistance to be given him, and added that he might suit his own convenience in leaving the port.

The *Morning Chronicle's* Correspondent says,

January 3rd—"To-day the *aldeanos* (villagers), have for the first time arrived in considerable numbers, driving into the town bullocks and hogs; and there is every prospect of a speedy return to the former supplies for the consumption of the place. Flour is more scarce than any other aliment, and bread is still very dear. Although the inhabitants endured great privations during the late siege, they could if necessary, have held out a month longer, or more perhaps. There was no dearth of rice, salt fish, *garbanzos* (chick-peas), scarlet beans, biscuit (of bad quality, however), salt pork, spirits, wine, charcoal, and there was an abundant supply of water. Those who could afford to pay for little comforts, such as raisins, wine, &c., &c., could get them, so that it was the poorer classes upon whom the state of siege bore the hardest as to nutriment. On the other hand females and children of all ranks suffered so much from fright, that they could hardly take needful sustenance, even if at their command.

"Let me not omit to mention that I find the vessel which some months back I informed you had been taken by the Carlists and carried into Bermeo was an American, not an English ship, as was supposed. She came from the Havannah with a cargo of tobacco and other colonial produce, which I now find was sold, and the duties regularly paid to the Faction's custom-house; in short, it is generally

understood that the vessel and cargo were destined for the Carlist market, and that there was a mercantile consignee to receive and dispose of the latter at Bermeo. The report of a British merchant vessel having been captured was artfully spread, with the double view of showing that Don Carlos had a naval force sufficient to capture British merchantmen on the high seas, and to serve as a screen for the introduction of supplies for the adherents of the Despot Carlos under the starry banner of the free American republic! But this is not all. A very short time back a *French* lugger appeared off Bermeo, apparently in distress: her masts were carried away, and she was towed into the small port of Bermeo in this seeming disabled condition. She was laden with provisions; and, to *prevent their being damaged* ('twas said), they were landed: offers for sale (the *nominal* sale) of the whole freight were promptly made; the duties, as was the case with the American vessel, being punctually disbursed. Thus Carlos V. obtained both revenue and supplies. But the most curious part of the story is, that this disabled lugger *had had a short passage direct from Bordeaux with an easterly wind and a smooth sea! and she came to a market prepared beforehand! the masts were broken purposely just before daylight, so as to account for the entrance of a vessel under the French flag into a port belongiug to Don Carlos.* She

was in *distress* forsooth? I hear several other vessels are daily expected at Bermeo from France with a large supply of shoes for the Carlists.

“I understand that the American vessel has gone to St. Ubes for a cargo of salt, which she will most likely succeed in conveying to Bermeo, and make a good speculation, as the Carlists are in great want of that article. This is the season when the farmers and other house-keepers kill their pigs and salt down their pork for the whole consumption of the ensuing year: the usual time indeed for this operation was just about the commencement of the late siege. All communication with Bilbao (whence salt was obtained in former years by smuggling, notwithstanding the war), having been cut off, the country people have been obliged to keep their hogs, which would otherwise have been killed, and the salted pork put into store by the Carlists for the troops. This accounts for the great number of fat hogs which have been brought to market at Bibao since the siege was raised. Families are now, according to annual custom, laying in their stocks. The usual price of salt in Bilbao is five reals the fanega; it is now seven reals, because the stock is scant; but in the Carlist villages in the vicinity the price for the little that can be procured is ninety reals the fanega! This is quite sufficient to prove the importance of blockading the small ports on the

coast: it is only by making the deluded peasantry feel the power of the Queen's government that they can be brought to a sense of their duty, and to an appreciation of their true interests." (*Vide Appendix D.*)

"Jan. 15.—The bar having fortunately been practicable almost ever since the 25th December, considerable supplies of flour and other necessaries have arrived at Portugalete, so that there is no want of anything here. A number of bullocks for the army have also arrived from Santander. Prices are rather higher than usual, and thus the poorer classes, many of whom have been left in a destitute condition in consequence of having lost their natural protectors during the siege, are still suffering severely."

"January 22.—Working parties are employed in clearing away the ruins of the convent of San Agustín, which is to be pulled down, and a fort erected on its site: this will be an important defence for the town. Provisions and other supplies daily arrive, and Bilbao is gradually assuming its natural appearance. Three companies are now stationed at the Desierto; thirty men are detached therefrom every morning at daylight to Monte Aspe, to protect the passage of the river; and the works for securing the banks of the Nervion will be commenced as soon as the British Sappers shall arrive from San Sebastian.

“The day before yesterday the *Comet* arrived from England—last from San Sebastian. Lieut. Turner, of the Royal Artillery, and Lieut. Lynn, of the Royal Engineers, both attached as aides-de-camp to Colonel Wylde, came out in the *Comet*, which brought the gratifying intelligence of the promotion of Commander Lapidge, of the *Ring-dove*, to the rank of post captain, and of Lieut. Le Hardy, of the *Saracen*, and Lieut. Otway, of the *Comet*, to the rank of commanders.

“These appointments were conveyed to Captain Lapidge and Commander Le Hardy (Commander Otway did not return in the *Comet*) by Commodore Lord John Hay, in the most handsome manner possible. His Lordship expressed his own high satisfaction at the promotion of officers whose professional merits had entitled them to the rewards now bestowed on them; and he enclosed a memorandum of thanks from the Admiralty to Captain Lapidge and all the officers and men under his command, for the able co-operation they have afforded to the cause of the Queen of Spain in the river of Bilbao. Lord John also enclosed a copy of a most satisfactory letter from his Excellency Mr. Villiers, forwarding the copy of a communication from Señor Calatrava, President of the Council, by order of her Majesty the Queen-Regent, conveying in her royal name, through the ambas-

sador, the grateful sense her Majesty entertains of the services of the officers and men of the British Navy on the late memorable occasion ; and Admiral Canas, who commands the Spanish naval forces on the coast of Cantabria, has, by her Majesty's orders (conveyed through the Minister of Marine), applied to Captain Lapidge for the names of all the officers of the *Ringdove*, *Saracen*, and *Comet*.

"The distinguished representative of the British Government, Colonel Wylde, has also received a communication of the most handsome and satisfactory nature from Mr. Villiers ; and I have no doubt but that, in addition to the marks of distinction so justly conferred on him by her Majesty (Colonel Wylde is now a Knight Commander of the noble order of Isabel the Catholic, in addition to the crosses of the upper grades of the orders of Carlos III. and San Fernando, with which he was already decorated, for former eminent services), we shall soon have the happiness of congratulating the gallant Colonel upon some high mark of approbation, on the part of our own King and Government, of the arduous and successful exertions of a representative of the British nation, who is universally honoured and esteemed by his countrymen and the Spaniards. You will have seen by the proceedings in the Cortes that the thanks of the Legislative Assembly have been justly voted to Lord John

Hay, as commander of the British naval forces on this coast, as well as to the officers and men under his command. I have reason to believe that a similar vote was intended to have been passed with regard to Colonel Wylde, whose name is so particularly mentioned in General Espartero's dispatches and proclamations, which were read and recorded in the Cortes. By some mistake, however, this due formality was omitted; but I am aware that communications of the most gratifying nature have been spontaneously made from Madrid to the British Government upon this subject.

"I must not omit to mention that among the naval promotions of officers on this station is that of Lieutenant Barlow, commanding his Majesty's brig *Royalist*, now at San Sebastian, to the rank of commander. Mr. Barlow is an excellent officer, who served for some time in the river Nervion, where he was employed on various arduous and important duties. Mr. Rogers, mate of the *Saracen*, a very deserving officer, is also appointed lieutenant.

"Lord Henry Russell arrived here from England, *via* San Sebastian, about ten days ago; he is on his way to join his Majesty's flag-ship at Lisbon, but will revisit San Sebastian and have a conference with Lord John Hay previously to proceeding to Madrid, which city he will take in his

way. His Lordship has visited all the remarkable points in this neighbourhood, and takes the greatest interest in the Queen's cause. Lord Henry Russell has been recently appointed to a lieutenancy on board the *Hastings*, seventy-four.

“The enthusiasm throughout the country with regard to the brave defenders of Bilbao is very great. The day before yesterday, the second in command of the National Guard of Vitoria, accompanied by the two other officers of the same corps, all three being principal inhabitants of the capital of Alava, arrived here, in order to congratulate the National Guard of Bilbao in the name of that of Vitoria. A solemn *Te Deum* was performed a few days ago in the church of San Juan; this ceremony was attended by all the Generals of the Army, the authorities, &c.

“It will be gratifying to the British public to know that nothing can exceed the good feeling evinced towards the English by all classes of the population of this heroic town. A similar feeling pervades the army. The inhabitants of Bilbao are very anxious to have an English garrison, and that the works about to be erected for the defence of the river should be garrisoned by British soldiers or marines. How far this can be accomplished I am not competent to judge; but I am satisfied that such a measure would give confi-

dence to the inhabitants, and tend, together with the fortification of the river, &c., more than any other measure, to revive the commercial prosperity of this town, where so many British interests are at stake.

“Dispatches have been received from Commodore Lord John Hay, who is at Santander, expressing in the most handsome terms his entire approbation of the exertions of Captain Lapidge and the naval officers under his command during the late operations. His Lordship has also written to Major Colquhoun, commanding the Royal and Marine Artillery, in similar terms; the artillery under that gallant officer’s directions was indeed splendidly served, and contributed in a great degree to the ultimate success of General Espartero’s operations for the relief of Bilbao. Lord John Hay having promised General Evans that this detachment of artillery should return to San Sebastian as soon as Bilbao should be relieved, they will embark at eight this morning in his Majesty’s steamer *Lightning* for that port. Captain Vicars, of the Royal Engineers, will remain here to superintend the works for the protection of the Bilbao River; some British military artificers will, I presume, be sent round from Santander to work under Captain Vicars’ directions.

“P.S.—The Artillery-officers, who have been

serving under Major Colquhoun, and who will return to San Sebastian this morning, are Lieutenants Basset and Clapperton, and Lieutenant Parke, of the Royal Marine Artillery.”—*Morning Chronicle*.

Another Correspondent writes:—“In justice to a meritorious officer of the navy, Lord John Hay some short time since instituted a strict inquiry, to ascertain whether there was any truth in the report that Captain Turner had been engaged in the Carlist service before Bilbao. The result is, that his Lordship has found the report to be totally groundless, and the gallant officer in question stands exempt from the slightest imputation of having acted contrary to the rules and regulations of his own service.”

The question of the *animus* of the unexpected and successful night assault, created a considerable sensation. The Christinos in Madrid would fain keep as much of the credit for Espartero and the Spaniards as possible. On the other hand, a Correspondent of a London evening ministerial paper, amongst the victorious British forces, writes:—

“Colonel Wylde, witnessing the disastrous consequences that would result to the interests of the Legion, which he has had always at heart, rode up to General Espartero and remonstrated with him on his intention of retiring. Espartero said he must withdraw his troops to Valmaceda, as it was

impossible to remain longer before Bilbao, knowing as he did the strength of the enemy's batteries, and the sacrifice of life that must be made in obtaining possession of one of the strongest of them, without which Bilbao must perish, or all under his command be lost. Colonel Wylde, who was in constant correspondence during the whole of the morning with Colonel Colquhoun, requested to know from General Espartero which of the batteries he deemed so well fortified. It was named, and forthwith made known to Colonel Colquhoun, who said that should not be the least obstacle; and *instantly*, with the British Marine Artillery, he advanced, covered by the Sailors of the *Ringdove* and the sixty men of the 10th regiment already named, and at the point of the bayonet drove the enemy from that position. A breach having been made in this place, the Marines and Sailors entered it."

Another Christino Correspondent states that it was Lord John Hay who remonstrated with, *or rather threatened Espartero* that he would withdraw every vessel, boat, officer and man belonging to the service of his Britannic Majesty, if he persisted in his intention of retreating upon Valmaceda. He relates the sequel as follows; and with regard to the point of "direct intervention," the account will be seen to be substantially the same

as that given in the ministerial journal, but this statement supplies us with fuller particulars:—

“This energetic and *well-timed threat* made the wavering General pause, and he began again to think of crossing the river and attacking the Carlist positions;—but declared he saw an insurmountable obstacle in a twenty-four pounder in a Carlist battery which commanded the crossing of the river. To this Colonel Colquhoun replied, that that should not long form any objection, and he soon after opened a fire upon the Carlist battery, which in a short time silenced the dreaded twenty-four pounder. Espartero then pointed to another and more distant battery which might prove a stumbling-block. The second objection was quickly done away with by Captain Lapidge, who, with the blue jackets and Marines of the *Ringdove*, landed on the right bank of the river, and, rushing up the height, took the battery in the most gallant manner. This noble example fired a Spanish regiment of Guards, who declared, that if not ordered to go on by the General, *they would proceed without his order*. In compliance with their intention a bridge of boats and rafts was constructed, and they passed over, followed by the rest of the army. The regiment of Guards and the English Marines and blue-jackets advanced against the fortified hill of the Banderas with the

most daring intrepidity ; and, though repulsed three times, at length succeeded in getting possession of it and dispersing the Carlists, but not without a great loss on both sides."

The *interference* of both Lord John Hay and Colonel Wylde is indeed clearly acknowledged (and having been successful, eulogized of course) by Espartero. His Report and Order of the day, fully admit and establish the facts that all the efforts of the native Christino army *alone* would have been totally ineffectual in preventing the fall of Bilbao.

The Correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle* continues:—

"General Espartero has written a dispatch to the Minister of War, in which, after speaking in the highest terms of the gallantry, judgment, and activity displayed in the late operations before Bilbao by Colonel Wylde, and the officers and men of the British navy and army,—he sends a list of the names of the officers whom he recommends for the decoration of the distinguished order of *Isabella la Catolica*, and of the men who are to have the order of Isabel II.; and in begging that her Majesty will approve of the same, he proposes also that the insignia of these Orders shall be sent to him immediately at the expense of Government, in order that he may

himself place them on the breast of each individual, after the permission of the British Government shall have been obtained. The General also proposes that a pension shall be granted by the Spanish Government to the widow and children of the late Mr. Rawle, master carpenter of the *Ring-dove*, who, you will remember, was killed by a cannon-ball whilst preparing to mount the carronades belonging to the *Saracen* in a battery above Burceña. Nothing, in fact, can be more gratifying than the manner in which the General and every officer and man of the army express themselves with regard to the British forces who have been co-operating with the Queen's troops during the siege."

REPORT OF GENERAL ESPARTERO ON THE VICTORY OF LUCHANA.

Head-quarters, Bilbao, Dec. 25.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The privations and sufferings of the troops I command have at length been worthily rewarded. Yesterday at four o'clock p.m. I ordered the embarkment of the light companies intrusted with the carrying of the enemy's battery at Luchana. In spite of the abundant fall of snow, the operation was successfully accomplished, in a few moments, (thanks to the bravery and enthusiasm of those troops, and to the efficient co-operation of the

British and Spanish Navy,) and the bridge was taken possession of. The enemy had broken it, but in an hour and a half it was re-established. The enemy concentrated imposing forces, and hastened to that spot. Already night had begun. Rain, snow and hail beat most tempestuously. The loss sustained by the army in the many hours of action has been considerable. The moments were critical, but vigorous bayonet charges rendered us masters of all the positions, and ended in the raising the siege of this town, which I have entered to day. All the ammunition, and immense stores have remained in our hands. We have taken eighteen or twenty pieces of ordnance, most of them heavy pounders. The bearer of this official bulletin will, as an eye-witness, give your Excellency the details. I cannot say more, owing to the precipitate departure of the steamer with these despatches, but I shall send a circumstantial bulletin of all the operations.

THE GENERAL ORDER ISSUED BY ESPARTERO ON
THE 26TH OF DEC. IN BILBAO.

Soldiers—All that can be said in your praise will be uttered by the whole world on learning the battle you have gained. My heart is beside itself with pleasure at seeing its best wishes fulfilled, and so lost in admiration of your valour, that I cannot

develop my ideas, or coolly describe your unexampled triumph.

The memorable day of the 24th was most tempestuous. A dreadful hurricane and heavy snow mingled with hail did but increase your ardour. In your cheerless bivouac I heard you express only your anxious wishes, that the night might prove fortunate for Bilbao. With soldiers possessed of such spirit, what enterprise could a General hesitate to undertake? It was necessary to wait for the tide, in order that the rafts and boats might reach the broken bridge of Luchana at the mouth of the river Asua. Four in the evening arrived. The companies of *caçadores*, commanded by the brave Ulibarrena, embarked. The *trincaduras* of our marine protected the convoy. The English and Spanish batteries, with the forces previously placed in the tower of Luchana, favoured the embarkation. At this moment a dense fall of snow prevented every object from being distinguished. But the victors, inflamed by the sound of cannon and of trumpets, poured forth repeated acclamations of "*Viva la Reyna y Libertad!*" To leap ashore, to seize the battery on the road, rout the enemy, to climb Monte de Cabras, and capture the battery there, was the work of a quarter of an hour. But these companies were too insignificant a force with which to break the enemy's lines. It was neces-

sary to re-establish the bridge of Luchana, in order to facilitate the passage of the rest of the army. The materials in readiness allowed *our* Engineers to prepare this bridge with solidity and haste. But the enemy assembled to defend their formidable heights; and we have to lament, soldiers, the loss of many valiant comrades of the second division, who had sworn to die rather than retreat.

It was necessary to reinforce them. After many hours of deadly fire, the moment appeared critical; and the presence of your General was demanded. I flew to the centre of the hot combat, at the head of the battalion of Colonel Minuissir's brigade, in order to decide the victory. I foresaw that we should achieve it from your prolonged and enthusiastic '*Vivas!*' Let us give our tribute of praise to the column which, without a shot, dislodged the enemy with the bayonet from the summit of the Banderas, capturing the battery which had worked us so much disaster, and, afterwards, all the successive positions as far as Bilbao! Let us bestow our contempt on certain cowards who would not follow the example of such heroism, and whose punishment I still hold in reserve.

Soldiers! the pride of thirty Carlist battalions has been humbled and crushed by your valour. A multitude of prisoners, twenty-five pieces of

Artillery, the greater part of large calibre,—a quantity of ammunition, an immense *materiel*, magazines, transports, hospitals, all were the prize of your valour ! Heroic Bilbao ! its worn and suffering garrison could not believe that it was its liberators who crowned the heights of Banderas, and had driven the rebel hordes from Olaveaga !

In leading you from Portugalete I promised to lead you to victory :—and you offered your blood ! I have fulfilled my promise, and you have kept your's. Recompense remains as my only duty towards those who distinguished themselves, and who shall see their reward in my General Order of to-morrow.

How immense has been our triumph ! Receive my gratitude ; prepare to reap all the fruits of so memorable a battle, fought after so many partial actions and forty days of painful operations ! Prepare for the new triumphs that await you ! Proud of having led you to victory, your General will know how to reward the brave !

ESPARTERO.

The letter of Colonel Wylde to Lord Palmerston may also find an appropriate place here, as confirmatory of the extent of British interference. The error respecting the capture of “the whole of the Artillery” has been already corrected. Another mistake should also be rectified. “The Command-

ing officer of Artillery and Engineers" was not taken. Neither of the two Generals of Artillery, (the brothers Montenegro) nor the General of Engineers (Sylvestre,) ever fell into Espartero's hands. Commandante Trovo was the individual captured.

COLONEL WYLDE'S DISPATCH TO LORD

PALMERSTON.

Bilbao, Dec. 25.

I have the sincerest satisfaction of informing your Lordship that the siege of Bilbao was raised, and General Espartero entered the city at the head of his advanced guard early this morning, and the rest of the army are at this moment defiling through and taking up their cantonments round it.

The enemy have been completely routed, and the whole of the artillery captured, as well as the Commanding officer of Artillery and Engineers, and a considerable number of prisoners; but I cannot give your Lordship the details at present.

The attack commenced about four yesterday afternoon with eight picked companies, who were embarked in launches and rafts opposite the Desierto about four o'clock in the afternoon, the foremost launches being towed by the crews of the *Ringdove* and *Saracen*, Captain Lapidge and Lieutenant Le Hardy leading in their gigs, covered by four Spanish gun-boats, and protected by the fire

of the Spanish and British Royal and Marine Artillery, the latter under the command of Major Colquhoun. In this order they pushed on past the enemy's advanced battery, and landed the troops immediately in its rear, with scarcely any loss; the enemy abandoning both it and their entrenchments on the broken bridge of Luchana almost immediately. This point gained, the rafts were moored alongside the bridge, to enable the column that marched along the quay to advance, until the engineers could repair the bridge. The enemy appear to have been taken completely by surprise, not being able to observe the embarkation of the troops in consequence of a heavy fall of snow at the time; and had it not been for the cheers of the troops giving them warning of their approach, many prisoners would have been made here. As soon as the battalions passed the bridge they formed, and pushed up the heights of Cabras, leading to the Banderas; and gained possession of them before the Carlists could collect force enough to prevent their establishing themselves. About nine o'clock, however, the Carlists made a desperate attempt to dislodge them, and partly effected their object, which they repeated three times during the night, but were at length finally repulsed, after four or five hours' hard fighting; and General Espartero, placing himself at the head of two bat-

talions, carried the enemy's battery of three heavy guns, and the height and fort of Banderas at the point of the bayonet. From this moment the flight of the enemy commenced, the main body by the Durango road, and the rest, (who had been left to observe Bilbao,) over two bridges of boats they had constructed opposite the village of Olaveaga, which they had not time to destroy.

I cannot yet ascertain the loss on the part of the Queen's troops, but it has been severe; the two battalions of guards alone having lost nine officers killed and twenty-three wounded, and nearly 500 men. Bilbao appears to have suffered considerably, one of its suburbs being nearly entirely in ruins. I believe about one thousand to twelve hundred of its garrison have been killed and wounded.

I can assure your Lordship that it is impossible to praise too highly the indefatigable zeal and energy which has been displayed by Captain Lapidge, Lieutenant Le Hardy, Lieutenant Otway and all the officers and crews of the *Ringdove*, *Saracen* and *Comet*, during the harassing operations carried on in the river for the last month; and I had the gratification of being requested by General Espartero to convey to them and to Major Colquhoun and Lieutenant Vicars of the Engineers, and all the officers under them, his

warmest thanks the moment he entered Bilbao, and assurances that without the aid of the British force he could not have succeeded in relieving Bilbao. I have, &c.

(Signed) J. W. WYLDE, Lieut.-Colonel.

The dashing style in which Christino successes are increased and magnified in successive bulletins is illustrated by the following second-hand article, published by Brigadier Jauregui on the raising of the siege. It is dated San Sebastian, Dec. 29:—

“After an obstinate and sanguinary engagement on the 24th, which lasted from four in the afternoon till six the following morning, the Queen's troops made their victorious entry into Bilbao. Our loss was 800 men put *hors de combat*; that of the rebels is nearly 1,000. We have taken from them 25 pieces of cannon and a quantity of ammunition. The enemy retreated in disorder towards Galdacano and Durango, and we are informed that a number of the insurgent Biscayans have left the Carlist army. This glorious victory, to which the batteries of the English Navy have powerfully contributed, has been gained amidst a tremendous storm of rain and snow. The bravery of our troops was never more brilliantly displayed than on this occasion, on which they have conquered an enemy

placed in a most formidable position. On the 27th, 860 prisoners were brought into Bilbao.

(Signed)

“JAUREGUI.”

Here 15 cannons magnified to 25! 260 killed and wounded, blown up to 1000! 65 prisoners to 860; *et ceteris paribus*. The following is the

ADDRESS TO LORD JOHN HAY BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL CORTES OF THE SPANISH NATION.

My Lord,—The General Cortes of the Spanish nation beheld with singular satisfaction the noble conduct of your Lordship during the important services which the ships of the British Royal Navy, and other forces under your command, have rendered to the national cause on every occasion. Your Lordship did more—you sought them anxiously, and your zeal and valour turned them to still greater advantage in the memorable siege of Bilbao. The whole of Spain felt grateful to you, and, considering herself bound to give to the world a public manifestation of her sentiments, the Cortes have framed a decree, of which the enclosed is a copy. Receive it, my Lord, as a testimony of gratitude and consideration towards yourself, and to the individuals who were acting under your orders in so marked a victory, which has excited the gratitude and admiration of the national congress.

In executing the agreeable commission with which the Cortes have charged me, I beg your Lordship will be so good as to accept the distinguished consideration and respect with which I have the honour to be your Lordship's, &c.

(Signed) JOAQUIN MARIA DE FERRER,
President.

Palace of the Cortes, Jan. 14, 1837.

Commodore the Right Hon. Lord John Hay,
commanding his Britannic Majesty's Squadron
on the coast of Cantabria.

His Majesty's steam ship, *Phoenix*.
Passages, Jan. 30, 1837.

EXCELLENT SIR,—I feel it impossible to express to your Excellency the high gratification with which myself, the officers and men composing the British force employed on the coast of Cantabria, have received the distinguished honour the Constitutional Cortes of this great and enlightened nation have been pleased to confer upon us.

If, in the discharge of the duties imposed on me by the government of my gracious Sovereign, I have had the good fortune in any degree to aid the Constitutional cause of her Catholic Majesty and her people, I feel that the services performed by the British Squadron have been more than amply and generously rewarded by this spontaneous

mark of approbation of the assembled General Cortes.

The brilliant example of heroism and of every virtue that can attach to loyalty and true patriotism exhibited by the commercial city of Bilbao during the late siege, must have a happy influence on the future events of this contest; while the cordial union which exists between the British and Spanish nations gives an earnest that these friendly ties will become every day closer, and of increasing mutual prosperity.

In thus conveying to the Constitutional Cortes, through the medium of your Excellency, the sincere acknowledgments of myself, the officers, and men composing the British Squadron under my command, for the distinguished honour conferred upon us, I beg your Excellency will accept the high expression of esteem and consideration with which I have the honour to be, Excellent Sir, your Excellency's most obedient servant,

JOHN HAY,

Commodore in command of his Britannic
Majesty's Squadron employed on the
north coast of Spain.

On the 6th of February, the principal church of San Sebastian exhibited a scene of solemn pomp,

of which a previous notification had been formally given to all who were invited to assist at it, by the civil and military authorities. It being determined that a grand requiem should be chanted, in conformity with the usual rites of the Roman Catholic Church, for the repose of the souls of those men who fell while defending Bilbao, the Spanish troops of the line, followed by the Urbanos and Chapelgorris, formed in procession at an early hour, moving on with reversed arms, and having their colours bound round with black crape. All the principal officers of the Legion attended on the occasion, headed by General Evans; and Lord John Hay, with the officers of his department, walked along in the order prescribed by their several gradations of rank. In the centre of the church a large *catafalque*, or funereal monument, was erected. It was surmounted with the national flag, and had on the sides appropriate inscriptions in Latin and Spanish. Lord John Hay took his station with the Alcalde and other civic functionaries to the right of the grand altar, and General Evans sat upon the left, having next to him the Spanish Admiral and General Chichester, while the staff and other officers ranged themselves along in front of the *catafalque*. The music was admirably executed throughout, and, as a state affair, the whole ceremony passed off as well as could be expected.

The sensation produced at Madrid, by the news of the relief of Bilbao, proved full well in what a vulnerable point the Queen's authority had been assailed, and well nigh shaken to its centre. The following brief details are collected from the statements of the correspondents of the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Herald*, and the *Morning Chronicle*, resident in the Spanish capital.

New year's day was ushered in with peals from the bells of Madrid, all of which were put into requisition, to celebrate the triumph of the Queen's arms before Bilbao. As a matter of course, an extraordinary *Gazette* was published, with a short despatch from Espartero, announcing the intelligence. The theatres, the public establishments, and the houses of the partisans of the present institutions were illuminated. Next day the public prints were loud in praise of the heroic General-in-Chief, who, for a long time before, had been the object of the bitterest and most envenomed attacks of the press. "Bilbao is saved!" exclaims a writer in one of these journals, "and the rebels have experienced before its gates, the death-blow which annihilates their hopes for ever! Glory to the *valientes*, who have acquired eternal renown! Glory to the first of free towns!—Glory to the invincible Bilbao!"

The sitting of the Cortes of the 2nd of January,

was almost exclusively occupied in panegyrics upon its valiant defenders, and in discussing proposals of honours and rewards to the survivors in the conflict.

Long before the appointed hour, the galleries were filled with anxious spectators ; and after the Chamber had elected Messrs. Ferrer, Olozaga, and Fernandez Vallejo, for the offices of President, Vice-President, and Secretary, during the month of January, a proposal, declaring "that the defenders of Bilbao, and the General and troops that had raised the siege of that city, deserved well of their country," was put in and read.

The Minister of War then rose and read Espartero's Dispatch, which was received with the greatest applause.

The Minister of the Interior, Señor Lopez, next addressed the house in a speech of extraordinary grandiloquence. He said, "From the commencement of the siege of Bilbao, the government was convinced of the necessity of raising it at all hazard. We were aware that the Pretender was most anxious to take possession of that city, which circumstance would afford him ample means of prosecuting his attempts against the liberty of the nation ; and it was for this reason that we gave the strictest orders to the Commander-in-Chief to spare no sacrifice necessary to raise the siege. Success has

crowned the efforts of the government, and the ardent wishes of all good Spaniards. The Cortes have heard all that has passed. Every thing is admirable, sublime, and heroic. With such commanders and soldiers, Señores, nothing is impossible, nothing is difficult. They can do what they like, and (rising in emphasis), *command destiny itself!*—*They scale Heaven, and realise the fable of the Titans!* Our army has not fought alone an enemy tenaciously bent upon his purposes and operations, possessing formidable positions, whose valour and despair had collected all his resources. No, *it has fought nature itself*, and the fury of the elements let loose upon it;—yet even *over the elements it has triumphed!* 'Midst the darkness of the night, and benumbed with cold, they were for a while obliged to yield to the fury of the tempest; they fell back, but 'twas only for a moment. They then rushed forward to the strife, vanquished their opponents, and again unfurled the banner of liberty. There is a particular circumstance connected with the noble feat of arms which our troops have achieved, and which, I believe, can only be related of Spanish soldiers. At midnight, and chilled to death, they were obliged to huddle together, and cover their persons with the dead bodies of friends and foes, by way of shelter against the inclemency of the weather! Assailed by the tempest—drenched

with rain, snow, and hail, in the depth of a terrible night, the Spanish army has proved superior to every obstacle of art or nature; and it was not obliged to exclaim, like a celebrated chief of antiquity, at the siege of a city, *perhaps* not more famous than Bilbao,—‘Great Jove, give us the light of day, and then, if you like, take part against us!’—No, our soldiers know how to conquer in the midst of darkness as well as in the light of day. They want the solar rays only to illumine their triumph, and show the radiant standard of liberty waving over the fields and mountains of Bilbao, whilst *the corpses of slain enemies serve it for a throne!* Their deeds exceed all exaggeration, as their merit exceeds any recompense that can be offered to them by their country! The government will remunerate their services; but the greatest reward for these brave warriors will be the satisfaction of having saved their brethren of Bilbao, and for ever ensured their country’s happiness. The inextinguishable aureola of glory will play upon their brows, and light them to the tomb on which immortality will for ever repose! This triumph is but the prelude of others more splendid which await us. Government will not sleep in the arms of victory. We shall assemble all our forces, invade the very heart of the Faction, take possession of the Pretender’s court, and there raise a

trophy to national justice and liberty, with an inscription which, similar to that attached by a neighbouring country to one of its rebellious cities, shall declare—‘This place was the nucleus of the war waged against liberty:—it has ceased to exist.’”

When Señor Lopez concluded his speech, proposals, “returning thanks to the Spanish and English Naval forces on the station, and requesting that an autograph communication expressive of the satisfaction of the Cortes, should be addressed by the President to the Corporation of Bilbao,—to the Commanders of its National Militia—to General Espartero,—to the commander of her Majesty’s Naval forces on the northern station,—and to Lord John Hay,”—were read and adopted unanimously.

M. Lujan dwelt at length on the heroic conduct of the Army of the north, declaring:—“The siege of Bilbao will eternize the gallantry, valour, and serenity of the Spanish soldier. Whilst the troops, who style themselves the descendants and inheritors of the conquerors of Austerlitz and Marengo, of the men, who declared themselves invincible at Moscow, at Jena, who conquered at Leutzen, and at the battle of the Pyramids,—whilst those troops were vanquished by the elements at Constantina, the soldiers of Espartero overcame the elements themselves!”

M. Domenech observed, "The British Naval forces have done as much, nay, more than could be expected from them. Our own have performed prodigies of valour; but it may be said, they are Spaniards; they fight for their country and liberty; and the enthusiasm which fires their bosoms suffices to render them brave: but the British sailors, who have behaved so nobly at Bilbao, did not fight for their country. We have to struggle both for our country and our liberties. They possess both, and therefore the Committee of National Rewards should not forget what has been so disinterestedly done by them, when the honours of the victory are to be distributed. I am so overpowered by my feelings, that I cannot continue. Long live Bilbao the free!"

A proposal, signed by several deputies, calling upon the Cortes to have the blank tablet in the Chamber filled up with the following inscription, was read, and approved:—"To the immortal Bilbao—to its heroic defenders—and to the valiant Liberating Army, the Spanish nation vows eternal gratitude."

Voluntary donations were made for the relief of the sufferers by the siege. At the head of the list appeared the name of Señor Mendizabal for four thousand *reals* (about forty pounds sterling). None of the Ministers subscribed a higher amount

than this. Don Miguel Santa Maria, Envoy Extraordinary from the Republic of Mexico, and his colleagues, presented to the Government 20,000 reals as a gift from the Legation to be applied to the relief of the orphans and widows of those who had fallen in the struggle. The bank of San Fernando and other public offices, followed the example, and the National Guards subscribed very liberally.

The Stock Exchange, of course, felt the movement imparted to all minds. On the first day the prices upon all stock went up five per cent. The public treasury also felt the effects of the increasing confidence in the stability of the Christino Government.

Señor Mendizabal pointed to Bilbao as a proof of the accuracy of his prediction of September, 1835, that the civil war might be terminated by *national* resources; and all the public men who had been prominent in their opposition to the introduction of French bayonets into Spain, claimed the issue of this trial of strength, as the triumph of their opinions and the justification of their confidence! Col. Wylde was again forgotten!

In the *Gazette* of the 4th January, appeared the following

“ROYAL DECREE.

“Desiring to reward in the most solemn manner

the sufferings and virtues, as well of the valiant defenders of Bilbao in the protracted and vigorous siege, which, for the third time, it has just sustained,—as of the troops which with so much glory, delivered that town from the enemy during the memorable days of the 24th and 25th of last December;—I have decreed, in accordance with my Council of Ministers, in the name of my exalted daughter Queen Isabel II. as follows:—

“Article 1. I declare with all the force of my maternal love, the town of Bilbao, its garrison and National Militia, the General-in-chief Don Baldomero Espartero, the army under his command, the National Marine, the British auxiliary force, and all the individuals, as well Spanish as English, who in a manner so heroic have defended, liberated, and co-operated in saving that immortal place, and whose brilliant efforts have concurred to give a day of glory to the nation,—to have fully responded to my hopes, and to equally deserve my gratitude.

“Art. 2. The town of Bilbao will add the title of ‘invincible’ to those which it already enjoys of *‘most noble and loyal.’*

“Art. 3. The corporation of the invincible town of Bilbao will be entitled henceforth to the style of ‘Excellency’ in its corporate capacity, and each of its members to the appellation of ‘Lordship’ (*Señoría*) during his period of office.

“ Art. 4. I grant to all the battalions of the garrison of Bilbao and of its national militia, the use in their banners of the insignia of the military order of San Fernando.

“ The like privilege I grant to all the corps of the Liberating Army which have most distinguished themselves in the judgment of the General-in-Chief.

“ Art. 5. confers a cross of distinction upon the defenders of Bilbao with the motto—‘ I defended the invincible town of Bilbao in its third siege, 1836.’

“ Art. 6. confers the same cross, with the words ‘ I saved Bilbao,’ to all soldiers, officers, and chiefs of the Liberating Army, and to all the individuals of the national and allied marine, military and mercantile, who contributed gloriously and effectively to raise the siege of Bilbao.

“ Art 7. grants to Don Baldomero Espartero and his lineal descendants the order of Nobility of Castile, with the denomination of Count of Luchana.

“ Art. 8. directs that on Sunday, 5th February next, shall be performed in all cathedrals, and parish churches throughout the kingdom, religious solemnities in memory of the brave men slain in defence of Bilbao.

“ Art. 9. My government will propose to the Cortes, firstly, that all edifices of private property which have been destroyed by the besieging faction of the invincible Bilbao shall be restored at the cost

of the nation. Secondly, that also at the cost of the nation, when its circumstances shall permit, shall be erected in the most convenient spot of the invincible Bilbao an appropriate and majestic monument to record to posterity its value and patriotism in the sieges it has sustained against a fratricidal faction. Thirdly, that to the widows and orphans of the defenders and liberators of Bilbao, be granted the pensions to which respectively they shall be deemed entitled; this charge forming henceforth a separate head in the general estimates of the nation.

“ Art. 10. The Governor of Bilbao, the General-in-chief of the army, and the Commandant of the Naval forces which have assisted, will propose to me without delay such other rewards as individuals under their command may have earned.”

“ Palace, Jan. 3, 1837.”

In the sitting of the 6th instant the Committee of National Rewards proposed the following Bill to the consideration of the Cortes:—

“ Article 1. The defenders of Bilbao, and the army and navy, as well Spanish as English, who contributed towards raising the siege, deserve well of the country.

“ Art. 2. The President of the Cortes shall write an autograph letter to the General-in-chief, Don

Baldomero Espartero, in testimony of the nation's gratitude, directing him to return thanks in the name of the Cortes to all the Generals, officers, and troops, as well of the Army as the Navy who had assisted in the defence of Bilbao, or in raising the siege; and another to the illustrious Commodore of his Britannic Majesty's Naval forces stationed on the coast of Cantabria, for the services which his Marines and Sailors have rendered to our cause; and finally, another to the Corporation of Bilbao, to the authorities, the national Militia and inhabitants, which is to be read every year on the 25th of December with due solemnity.

“Art. 3. The ground hitherto occupied by the Capuchin convent in Madrid is to be destined for a square, to be called ‘*La Plaza de Bilbao*,’ in the centre of which a bronze monument of elegant and simple construction, is to be erected for the purpose of perpetuating the glory of the defenders and liberators of that invincible town.

“Art. 4. The government shall be authorized—
1st, to defray out of the national purse the reconstruction of all the edifices belonging to loyal subjects which had been destroyed during the siege—
2dly, the erection of a simple and majestic monument, in the most convenient situation, which shall manifest to posterity the valour displayed by the inhabitants of Bilbao during the sieges which they

sustained against the Carlist faction;—and 3dly, the amount of the pensions which may be accorded to the widows and orphans of the defenders and liberators of Bilbao.”

Mr. Villiers, the British Ambassador, received a splendid serenade from the inhabitants of Bilbao resident in Madrid, in token of the gratitude due to his countrymen for their gallant and successful efforts to compel the Carlists to raise the siege.

During the ensuing Carnival in Madrid the public balls were very fully attended. A series of six was given in the grand saloon of the new theatre of the Oriente, in the neighbourhood of the palace, for the benefit of the widows and orphans of Bilbao and were attended by all the people of Madrid, great and small. It was said that the Queen was there once *incog*. Her sister, the wife of the Infante Don Francisco, certainly attended one. The price of the tickets was a dollar and a half; and as at one ball there were six thousand persons, the receipts for that single night amounted to about 1,800*l.*; a very handsome contribution from the patriotic masqueraders of Madrid.

On the day of High Carnival, (Sunday) the funeral ceremony for the souls of the victims of Bilbao was performed with great pomp and solem-

nity in the church of San Isidro. The entire body of the National Guards were drawn up in the street of Toledo, reaching from the *Plaza de la Constitucion* to the gate of Toledo, about a mile in length. A party of masquers in black, to personate the ghosts of the slain at Bilbao, paraded the town, bearing emblematic banners, while attendant bands performed appropriate airs, solemn and patriotic. During the three last days of the Carnival, when, according to custom, people traversed the Prado and the open streets in masks and dominos of various devices, the groups passed amid throngs of gazers without exciting any stronger feeling than that which was evinced in the mere idle regard of ordinary curiosity; but the ghosts of the Bilbaonians attracted extraordinary attention.

CHAPTER X.

SHORTLY after my arrival at Bayonne, an article which first appeared in the *Courier* (London) Newspaper, reached that town in the columns of *Galignani's Messenger*, and created not a little surprise both to myself and my friends there. On reaching Durango after the retreat from Bilbao, I had written to Mr. Mitchell, the resident correspondent of *The Morning Herald*, at Bayonne, a gentleman from whom I had received much kind attention and valuable information during my short sojourn there, and whom I wished to apprise of my safety and intention of returning thither for the winter. This letter Mr. Mitchell never received,—it having fallen, by accident, into Christino hands, by whom it appears to have been mutilated, interpolated and altered at pleasure,—then forwarded to London, where a *Liberal* newspaper printed it as genuine for the enlightenment of a “generous and confiding public.” I have marked in italics the forged interlineations, which struck me

on the instant I perused them, as expressions and ideas perfectly foreign to me ; but my memory does not extend to the restoration of portions, where obvious erasures have been made, with the exception of “ 2000 reals,” transmuted into a “ couple of dollars ” and two “ parcels of tea ” metamorphosed into “ bottles of Scotch whiskey ” viz. :—

INTERCEPTED TORY CORRESPONDENCE.

(From the *Courier*.)

Extract of a letter from our Correspondent at San Sebastian, dated January 5th :—“ I have the pleasure of sending you a copy of a letter intercepted and delivered to Lieutenant-General Evans to-day. The writer, who signs himself E. B. Stephens, is undoubtedly the able correspondent of a Morning Tory Paper, who writes in a style scarcely less amusing than that of Walpole himself ; and as the letter is addressed to Mr. Mitchell, the correspondent of another Morning Tory Paper, should the Tories of England doubt what may be stated by the Liberals, they may perhaps be inclined to give credit to the confidential communication of two of their own best friends. I have scarcely a moment to spare ; nor is it necessary, as Mr. Stephens’s letter will give you a more correct idea of things than any thing that could come from San Sebastian ; but I may add that the fact

of the baggage of Lord Ranelagh having been captured cannot be doubted, as the most valuable articles belonging to him are here in San Sebastian, except the splendid wigs and perfumery, so humorously described by his friend. His drawing of the enemy's lines is in the possession of General Evans, and I believe also his diary. If as well written as Stephens's letter, and properly ornamented with a drawing of his Lordship, in the magnificent dressing-gown, it will be a literary gem. You must know that the action was not believed serious in the early part of the night; and that the Queen's troops actually retired, until fresh orders were sent to them to make good their positions. It would be, *I suppose*, on this occasion, that his Lordship acted the part of devil incarnate, and slaughtered his foes; and he would then, I suppose, go to bed quietly, never dreaming they would have the audacity to disturb the slumbers of Louis XIV., and rob him of his wigs and perfumery. His Lordship little expected such a visit. In the room he had occupied, was found a book open, which it was supposed he had been reading, when the news of 'They are coming!' forced its way into his ears, in spite of his wig. No news of importance."

"The following is the intercepted letter referred to by our Correspondent:—

"Durango, Tuesday, Dec. 27.

"MY DEAR MITCHELL,—*Thank God I'm alive,* and I write to tell you that we are all safe; that is Ranelagh, Butts and Son, Humphrey Bell and myself; *we have had a most infernal drubbing. What has become of the army Heaven knows; it has been a complete débacle.* I know little more than that Espartero took the broken bridge of Luchana on Saturday evening because it was not defended by a sufficient force. Ranelagh and Bell fought *like devils*, charging at the head of thirty men to retake the advanced post; but a scoundrelly Captain of the 6th Regiment of Biscay, who I hope will be publicly disgraced, said, that he was of the Reserve, and drew off his men, so that our friends found themselves fighting against Espartero with five Biscayans. *Que voulez-vous?* The Trincaduras came sweeping up, and clearing the causeway with grape shot; the column gained a footing on the hill, and *made a hurra* on the Banderas, which they carried before the dawn. The cry *along our line* then was 'they are coming;' this was quite enough for me, so I mounted my mule, *and galloped off ventre a terre*, along the Camino Real de Munguia: the infantry *fled* through the snow to Galdacano: the Prince and suite with the artillery (*i. e.* all that was saved), to Guernica. *Ranelagh,*

Colonel Butts and Son, minus their baggage, gained the same place on foot—*poor Ranelagh, in a magnificent dressing-gown a la Louis Fourteenth. The whole of his baggage, including his splendid toilette-case, well stocked with Delcroix's most exquisite perfumery, and two of Truefit's elaborately-made wigs, fell into the hands of the Christinos.* For myself, I rode on, without a peseta in my pocket, to find out the Señora Calle, who gave me *a couple of dollars instead of two hundred*, alleging that she would probably very soon be in Bayonne, and therefore would then pay me the rest—*cold comfort this! Entre nous, the game is up, and I shall cut my stick*; you may, therefore, expect to see me in Bayonne almost immediately; *to tell you the truth, I'm dead beaten.* I hope the new manifold machine has not been dispatched hither from Bayonne; pray write and tell me, if I have any chance of finding on this side the Pyrennees, my surtout, umbrella, and the two *bottles of Scotch Whiskey*—(there's no swallowing their accursed aguardiente;) also how the devil I'm to get across the frontier *to Irun* with my baggage, and whether I could travel better to St. Juan de Luz, with or without my mule: I know I can sell her at Irun for what she cost me at Estella, but I don't know if I can manage my baggage so as to avoid delay at Behobie without her help; *but after all, sell her I must, for I am*

regularly cleaned out. Tell me also what I am to say to the people at the passport-office there? I still retain my Bayonne receipt for my English one. Shall I bring one from Don *Gulielmo* Sierra? The day after I receive your letter, I shall start for Bayonne, *and happy shall I be to find myself once more, with a whole skin, at the Hotel St. Etienne, for I have had quite enough of this cut-throat work ;* therefore request *that d—d h—g,* the M——s de L—l—de to keep all letters and newspapers for me, lest they should cross me on the road. Many thanks for all favours : my dear Mitchell, in haste for post, after riding over the snow from Guernica,

"Most truly yours,

"E. B. STEPHENS."

The London papers brought, in addition, the following lines, which evince an amusing power of versification ; and, with the exception of a couple of cockney rhymes, and a few sprained feet, present a superior specimen of epistolary travestie.

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL DISPATCH FROM A
CORRESPONDENT AT HEAD-QUARTERS.

"Durango, Tuesday, Dec. 27.

"Dear M——l,

"Thank God, we're all living and well,
That is, R——, self, the two Butts, and H. Bell :

Though we've had a sound beating, I'm sorry to tell ye,
 And the Catholic army is mauled to a jelly.
 By a bridge we had broken, our outposts to cover,
 On Saturday night the Christinos got over,
 Because Espartero had managed to mend it,
 Before our fine fellows were there to defend it.
 And though R—— charged like the d—l from h—l,
 With thirty Biscayans and brave Humphrey Bell,
 Yet a scoundrelly captain, I wish they may break him,
 Swore loudly *his* post was the rear, devil take him!
 And left with five men our Conservative hero,
 To fight all the army of brave Espartero!
Que voulez vous, friend? they came tearing and shouting,
 Took by storm the Banderas, and forced our redoubt in:
 And soon with their guns swept the causeway so clean,
 That there was not a rag of our corps to be seen.
 Our infantry scampered like chaff from the wind,
 The Prince, suite, and cannon, came limping behind;
 And as for myself, I am free to confess,
 I was never so hurried to *get through the press*.
 So I galloped my mule off as fast as she *can* go,
 Nor thought myself safe till I got to Durango:
 While R—— trudged it on foot, which was worse,
 In a flower'd dressing-gown *a la Louis Quatorze*.
 But, alas! all his baggage, arms, uniforms, plumes,
 With Truefitt's best wigs, and Delcroix's best perfumes:
 With a splendid *toilette* case, and all that was in it,
 By the rascally Queenites was grabbed in a minute.
Carajo! to think of that greasy mobility
 Overhauling the wardrobe of English gentility—
 Accoutring their *cuerpos* in yeomanry dresses,
 Their noddles in Truefitt's superlative tresses,
 And becoming, the first time for many a year,
 Acquainted with soap, at the expense of a Peer!

Entre nous, the game's up: I shall e'en cut my stick,
 And make off for the frontier uncommonly quick:
 Therefore send me no more your new manifold writers,
 To ingross the great deeds of legitimate fighters:
 For in truth I'm dead beat, and, to make my tale shorter,
 The —— must look out for another Reporter.
 So pray tell me where I can find, my dear fellow,
 On this side the mountains, my cloak and umbrella,
 With two bottles of whiskey, (I wish they were twenty,)

For I *can* drink no more of their curst *aguardiente*.
 Also tell me how I and my baggage can get out
 To Irun, and whether 'twere better to set out
 With my mule or without her: I know I can sell her
 At Irun, for what she cost *me* at Estella:
 And sell her I must, there's nought else to lay hand on,
 And *her* legs are the last I have left me to stand on.
 I'm off for Bayonne when your answer I hear,
 And if I've the luck once to find myself there,
 With a sound skin and whole, at Hotel St. Etienne,
 The fiend may catch *me* o'er the frontier again!
 For I think that this cut-throat employment of mine
 Would be scurvily paid at a guinea a line.
 So tell that d—d h—b—g, M— de L—l—de,
 To keep all my letters and papers in hand.
 Adieu my dear M——, no time to be lost,
 Truly yours,

E. B. S——,

In haste for the *Post*.

Leaving aside the amusing imitations of the poet, who certainly possesses "a talent of versification," I owe it to my readers (as well as to myself and my friends), to correct some of the

poetic portions of the prose epistle. Lord Ranelagh was never at Guernica—was not on foot during the retreat—did not lose his baggage—and had no wigs, perfumery, toilette case, or magnificent dressing-gown, at the siege. I had never been, previous to my return, at the Hotel St. Etienne—there is no such person as Humphrey Bell—and Irun was not “over the frontier.”—I never used the coarse and desponding expressions referring to the army and the cause of Don Carlos, or the still more vulgar and calumnious epithet applied to the noble and truly excellent individual adverted to in the conclusion of the compilation.

To put the matter to the test, I immediately wrote four letters; one to *The Morning Post*, stating the facts of the forgery, calling on the Editor of *The Courier* to procure from his Correspondent, or from General Evans, the original stolen letter; demanding, as an act of simple justice, that all who were personally interested should have an opportunity of inspecting that letter at *The Courier* office; and of tracing the fabrications to their source:—the second, third, and fourth, were as follow; all of which were published in every London paper, with the exception of *The Courier*.

No. 2.

“ Bayonne, 21st January, 1837.

“ SIR—In *Galignani's Messenger* of the 17th instant, I find an article commencing as follows :—

“ ‘ INTERCEPTED TORY CORRESPONDENCE.

(From *The Courier*.)

“ ‘ Extract of a letter from our correspondent at San Sebastian, dated January 5.

“ ‘ I have the pleasure of sending you a copy of a letter intercepted and delivered to Lieutenant-General Evans to-day. The writer, who signs himself E. B. Stephens, is’ &c.

“ I perceive that this letter is also copied into *The Morning Chronicle* of the 14th instant. As these papers, I understand, are regularly transmitted to you, I need only direct your attention to their respective dates, and proceed at once to inform you that I have this day written to *The Morning Post*, stating that the letter referred to, and to which my signature appears attached, is in all its essential parts, personal and political, a calumnious forgery, the stock-jobbing perpetrator of which deserves to be expelled for ever from the society of gentlemen.

“ *The Courier's* correspondent having thought proper to connect your name with this infamous affair, I write on the instant to afford you the

opportunity of rescuing it from the disgrace of any participation in the matter of furnishing 'the copy;' and to request that you will do me the justice to forward the original 'letter' without delay, to the office of *The Courier*, where the handwriting may be subjected to such a scrutiny, as may lead to a detection of the author of the malicious falsifications which pervade it.

"As I am unacquainted with the name of *The Courier's* correspondent, who appears to be in your confidence, I take the liberty of enclosing an open letter addressed to him on the same subject, which I beg may be forwarded to him as soon as possible. I feel it necessary further to inform you, that I shall this day send a *manifold copy* of this communication to *The Morning Post* for publication.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

"EDWARD BELL STEPHENS."

"To Lieut. General Evans, San Sebastian."

Note by the Editor.—To this Letter no reply ever arrived.

3.

"Bayonne, Jan. 21.

"SIR—A letter appeared in *The Courier* newspaper of the 13th instant from a correspondent at San Sebastian, dated January 5, and commencing

—‘I have the pleasure of sending you the copy of a letter intercepted and delivered to Lieut.-General Evans to-day. The writer, who signs himself E. B. Stephens, is’ &c.

“I beg leave to inform you that I have written to London to publicly characterise the ‘copy of the letter alluded to as being in all its essential parts, personal and political, a calumnious forgery—the stock-jobbing perpetrator of which deserves to be expelled for ever from the society of gentlemen,’ and have dared its publishers to produce the original.

“I now write to afford you an opportunity of publicly explaining your conduct in this transaction, and have only further to say that this letter will be published.—I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

“EDWARD BELL STEPHENS.”

‘To the correspondent of *The Courier* at San Sebastian.”

Note by the Editor.—This letter also remained unanswered.

4.

“Bayonne, Friday, Jan. 20.

“MY DEAR LORD RANELAGH,—I beg leave to enclose you *The Morning Chronicle* of the 14th inst., just arrived, in which I find a letter attributed to me, dated ‘Durango, Tuesday, Dec. 27,’ contain-

ing an extraordinary *mélange* of truth and falsehood, evidently concocted by some very ungentleman-like enemy of the cause you have so warmly espoused, and whose envy would gladly veil your Lordship's gallant conduct by an attempt at ridicule, surreptitiously introduced into a stolen private letter of mine. I sincerely hope that your Lordship will believe me incapable even of conceiving the tissue of absurdity which the forgery embodies, and that you will continue to do me the justice to regard me as one who can admire and applaud the disinterested bravery that devotes itself to the maintainance of a principle, untainted by the bad taste and worse feeling that could urge to its destruction.

“I have the honour to remain your Lordship's sincere admirer and very obedient servant,

“EDWARD B. STEPHENS.”

“Viscount Ranelagh, Hotel St. Etienne.”

5.

The following is his Lordship's reply:—

“Bayonne, Jan. 21, 1837.

“MY DEAR SIR,—I have just received your note, with the copy of *The Morning Chronicle* of the 14th, containing a supposed intercepted letter of your's. I only regret that you should have thought it worth your while to assure me it was fabricated, for, from

its blunders and fabulous absurdities, I knew at once it was a 'weak invention of the enemy.' I only hope, for the sake of the reading public, that the imaginative portion of the article descriptive of my progress, afforded them the same amusement that it has done myself; for, to say the least, it has the merit of being well got up, and, I have no doubt, succeeded for the moment in forwarding any stock-jobbing scheme the writer had in view. However, the laughable part concerning my *Louis Quatorze* dressing-gown, as exhibited in my flight, is somewhat too palpably contradictory of the statement of my being with the troops at Luchana, fighting 'like a devil;' not to mention the incongruity of braving in such a costume as bitter a night of snow and sleet as can be imagined. As for the *wigs*, they must have been purely ideal, or imported from Westminster, as there does not exist such a *materiel* in the Carlist army. However, to speak seriously, I much regret, but am not in the least surprised, to find that the Radical journals should have first attacked you for having published a private letter (which I know to be false), and on this pretext, have given to the world as authentic, a letter in the strictest sense private, embellished and falsified to suit their own views.

"As for the *faccioso* apparel, which I brought to the siege of Bilbao, and which I retain with espe-

cial care (although claimed by *The Courier's* Correspondent as being in the possession of General Evans), I have no doubt it would be a very valuable acquisition in San Sebastian ; but, as you well know, I was the only Englishman besides yourself who succeeded in preserving his little baggage, with the exception of three military books that I had not placed in the small portmanteau behind my saddle. I have particularly to regret the loss of one on the Art of making War, which, I doubt not, will be in the highest degree acceptable to the Lieutenant-General, and in all probability will be deemed an adequate substitute for those he lost at Fuentarabia.

“ With regard to the ‘immense *materiel*’ of perfumery which I am alleged to have lost, I believe a similar mistake was committed when Colonel Wylde enumerated Espartero’s cannon as part of the spoils taken from the Carlists.

“ Most truly yours,

“ RANELAGH.”

“ To E. B. Stephens, Esq.”

The following letter from a highly respectable English gentleman, whose name appears garbled in the *Courier's* publication, also throws an interesting light on the subject.—

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

"SIR—A letter, purporting to be the genuine copy of one from Mr. E. B. Stephens, correspondent of *The Morning Post*, having been published in *The Courier* of the 13th ult., and thence transferred to your columns, I trust that, inasmuch as it contains several falsehoods and inuendoes against certain English gentlemen serving as volunteers in the army of Don Carlos, you will, in the spirit of fairness, give insertion to a few observations upon the real facts of the case, which I consider myself fully competent to make, having had personal evidence of nearly every circumstance attending the siege and relief of Bilbao. So evident to me is the existence of interpolation and forgery in that supposititious document, that it would not be worth serious refutation, were it not for the purpose of placing the public upon their guard against similar reports from the same quarter.

"That Mr. Stephens did write a letter to Mr. Mitchell, and that it was surreptitiously obtained, is undoubtedly true; but that such a description, wholly inconsistent with truth, of scenes in which he, as well as myself and the other English volunteers, bore a personal part, is at once out of the question. I shall leave to others to comment upon the purloining and publication of private



letters ; but I cannot help expressing surprise that a journal, calling itself respectable, could have contaminated itself with the admission of an article manifestly intended for the furtherance of some paltry stock-jobbing scheme.

“To point out one fabrication amongst the many contained in this letter, I will refer to that portion of it which represents Lord Ranelagh as aroused from his bed on the morning of the 25th, by the unexpected entrance of Espartero’s army, and seeking a precipitate flight *on foot*, arrayed in a brocaded dressing-gown, and thankful to escape with the loss of an immense quantity of baggage, which, containing every adjunct of the toilette, whether useful or ornamental, was left a prey to the enemy. It is somewhat singular, by the way, that this (according to *The Courier’s* description) very valuable materiel, should have entirely escaped my observation, considering that I was constantly with Lord Ranelagh, and knew what he was in the habit of carrying with him almost as well as what constituted my own equipment ; and I can safely take upon myself to say, that I never saw anything more in his possession than the few indispensable conveniences usually carried about with him by every English officer, and which might be (as indeed was Lord Ranelagh’s custom), easily contained in the small valise in use amongst the

English cavalry. So much for the nature and value of this baggage. Now for the fact of its having fallen into the hands of the Christinos. It is unfortunate for the veracious compiler of *The Courier's* letter, that the only English who succeeded in preserving their baggage were Lord Ranelagh and Mr. Stephens. His Lordship, after returning to Olaveaga, after the affair of Luchana, sent a message to other English gentlemen to hold themselves in preparation for a retreat, and placing behind him on his horse the small dragoon valise, or knapsack, containing all his baggage, proceeded leisurely to join the staff of General Eguia.

“ Mr. Stephens, who got Lord Ranelagh's message (the only one who did so), succeeded also in securing his effects; but the other English, viz. Colonel Butts, his son, Captain Fitzthomas, and myself, knew nothing of the extent of the danger until midnight, when, perceiving the fire of musketry becoming gradually nearer and more distinct, we determined to ascend the hill of las Banderas, to learn precisely how matters stood, leaving our baggage in the quarters of Colonel Butts, in the full expectation of being able to return in time to reclaim it. On arriving at the heights, the first persons we encountered were Lord Ranelagh and Mr. Stephens, with whom, after remaining for some

time spectators of the conflict on Monte de Cabras, we proceeded to a neighbouring house, occupied by General Eguia's staff. We (that is, the English party) were the last to quit this building, which in a very few minutes afterwards was taken and burnt by the enemy.

"I have given you above a true and, as far as it goes, an accurate statement of facts, and, although I must apologise for addressing you so much at length, I think it but an act of public duty to come forward in protestation against the unworthy and dishonourable principle set forth by the publication of the letter in *The Courier* of the 13th, viz., that for the advancement of some crooked political purpose or a financial speculation, the confidence of private letters shall be invaded, and their contents given to the world in an interpolated or distorted form.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,

"Your very obedient servant,

"S. M. HUMPHREYS."

"Irun, Jan. 21, 1837."

The Courier absolutely refused to investigate the forgery, or afford any explanation of the matter; saying,—“Whether there have been interpolation or not, we are wholly innocent of any such offence.

As we received the letter so we published it; and on our Correspondent's truth and good faith we place a most firm reliance. There is no occasion for us to interfere, as Mr. Stephens and *The Post* recommend, to procure from him his original letter from San Sebastian, as he has written both to our Correspondent and General Evans, and we have no doubt they will give him a proper answer, and take proper care of the letter." However, neither their Correspondent nor General Evans ever ventured either to produce the original letter, or to explain the means by which its falsification was forwarded to London for publication. The subject however attracted considerable attention in the Basque provinces, and the following explanation appeared in a letter from the Correspondent of *The Morning Post* at San Sebastian, dated the 11th of April, 1837:—"Having been informed of some circumstances connected with the forgery of the letter of your late correspondent in the Basque provinces, which was published by the *Courier*, I think it my duty to communicate the facts, as they have been told to me on what I consider to be unquestionable authority. The original letter, in conjunction with other letters, was brought into Bayonne by a Carlist courier, and by accident fell into the hands of the Sous-Prefet. The latter gave the correspondence to the Christino Consul, who forwarded it

to San Sebastian, and it came into the possession of General Evans. The military secretary of the latter, Lieut.-Colonel Hermann, it appears, obtained Mr. Stephens's letter, and, as the facetious Legionite affects to be a wit, thought it would be a good joke to forge the handwriting of a gentleman who was writing privately and confidentially to a friend. Whether Evans was cognizant of this act of his secretary I do not know; but at all events the Hon. Member has never taken any steps to disavow the unofficer-like and ungentleman-like conduct of his Sub.

“Hermann having completed his mean and pitiful task (which, of course, was mere fun, having no reference to any effect the forgery might produce on the London Stock Exchange), gave the fabricated letter to Mr. Black, who is in the Commissariat department, as a genuine production of your correspondent. The latter, it is affirmed, is a stolid kind of person, and readily believed it: he was highly fortunate in being enabled to take a part in the violation of private confidence. He is the correspondent of *The Courier*, and to that journal, as the readiest and dirtiest Christino utensil to be found, did he immediately forward Hermann's forged feat. The rest you are aware of: the publication by an Editor of a private letter, which offence was aggravated by his subsequent refusal

to give up the name of the individual who supplied the fabrication, is fresh in your recollection, and requires no additional notice from me."

The following is an extract from another Correspondent of *The Morning Post* at St. Sebastian, who writes on the 22nd of June, 1837, the following additional particulars, in which a spirited young townsman of mine (who has a talent for being foremost in every danger), appears as leader and principal in the performance of an act of retributive justice.

"Hermann, *quondam* military secretary to Evans, and forger of Mr. Stephens's letter, has had his beautiful teeth removed by a pistol ball yesterday morning. During his period of authority, when Westminster's M.P. mismanaged affairs, Hermann gave offence to Lieut.-Colonel M'Cabe of the Royal Irish, who, knowing what he had to expect from Evans if he dared to chastise his *factotum*, prudently kept his counsel until the 10th of June had expired. Hermann, knowing what was likely to happen to him from many officers whom he had cavalierly treated, prudently retreated on the 9th to Bayonne, where he remained until Friday last, when he returned, hoping that the storm might have blown over, and some of his *friends* sailed to England. In this he was disappointed, as upon the very moment he landed here, a message was delivered. Finding that the plea of official duty

would nought avail, as M'Cabe threatened publicly to insult him, he at length gave a meeting, and the result was such as I have mentioned. With the exception of requiring a new set of teeth and being confined to his room for three weeks or a month, no worse consequences are apprehended."

CHAPTER XI.

IN the Basque Provinces and Navarre the women play a very active and influential part. They may be seen engaged in field operations, digging as sturdily as the men, bearing the harvest home in heavy burthens, or carrying it to market; again, managing boats on the rivers with surprising strength and dexterity, or driving provision or ammunition carts under a cannonade with a degree of equanimity that indicates a long familiarity with the perils of civil warfare. They do not, indeed, carry arms, but they know the use of them right well, and are not at all put out of their way by the introduction of such furniture into their kitchens and chambers, or the necessity of "receiving a company" (sixty men), night after night, who strew every room in the house with their muskets, bayonets, and cañanas, and leave them not room enough to whip their cat. When Espartero's troops lately

came plundering along the rich vale of Azua, some half-dozen Christinos who ventured into a *casario* a little in advance, found only the good wife at home who, pretending to be very much alarmed, did not cause them much concern in return. On a sudden she ran out, locked them up, summoned assistance, and, returning ere they could find means to escape took them all prisoners ! I saw another whose cow had strayed on the road side near the Church of Begoña, during Villarreal's siege of Bilbao, and who fearlessly went to drive it back. The Urbanos in the church tower deliberately fired, and shot her down. She lived, however; was carried to the hospital at Derio, despite the continued efforts of the sharpshooters,—and to the surprise of many, recovered from the effect of the ball which had passed right through her body. That shot has done the Christinos no good. She “will remember it to them !” So will all her kith and kin to the fifteenth remove in the mountains of Asturias and Catalonia. Spaniards, male and female, have excellent memories for such matters. The latter have, in addition, the gift of language, which acts as a formidable recruiting agent in whatever cause it bestirs itself. But the enthusiasm of the Basque women in the cause of Don Carlos does not confine itself to words. It breaks out in acts on every opportunity. On his visit to the fortress of Guebara

in September last, when all the artilleros were in joyous activity to acknowledge the honour in their own way, a Captain's wife was on the castle platform, the most vivacious of all. She seized a port-fire, swung it manfully, stood to her gun (the largest she could find in the fortress), and fired salute after salute as long as they would prime and load for her; in fact, till the King entered and made his bow to her ladyship. They are ready for any thing in the way of contest, either in mirth or earnest; cannonade, *culada*, *bolero*, or snowballs. I saw two young officers fairly pelted off the field during the Christmas holidays, by a couple of hardy Durango lasses, who evinced a surprising knack of making and flinging two for their one, of hitting hard, and receiving soft. The *Señores oficiales* did their best; but the girls' heads were down and away as quick as thought, and it was impossible to make an impression on them elsewhere.

Exposure to sun and air, without any shade to their features, gives all the elderly female peasants the appearance of being one flesh with the male, both being thoroughly tanned; but the younger ones, who are not so much exposed, present occasionally complexions of a ruddy bloom, that would attract admiration even in England; features finely chiselled, of a singular nobleness and delicacy (especially in that wild valley, encircled by leagues of

mountains, containing Ascoytia, Aspetia, and the splendid church of Loyala), with dark eyes of a power rarely to be found in our northern latitudes, and which appear to owe much of their singular force, to the contrast afforded by the habitual repose of the other features. In some countenances, this strange diversity of expression produces an effect more startling than agreeable. The lower part of the face may be fixed and pallid; in short, half dead; while the eyes are mobile and brilliant, as if something more than alive! I cannot explain the cause, not understanding the physiology of the matter. However, the Basque sculptors and carvers study the effect to good purpose, and all their churches present the *Madona* and the favourite *Santa* of the place as veritable Basque beauties of the highest grade; the pouting lips (which, when they *do* smile, present a *copia* of graceful meanings with a varying power of expression that must be seen to be appreciated) forming the most distinctive characteristic. A French woman can smile with her shoulders, eyebrows and teeth, without the aid of lips, but the beautiful Basque *paysana* can do infinitely more by the mere relaxation of hers, and speakingly pourtray all the phases of amiability and intelligence without opening her mouth. There is no affectation in the matter; it is pure power. The ecclesiastical sculptors evidently regard it as a

heavenly endowment, and reclaim as much of its divine expression for the cherubs and archangels as their imitative ability can compass, without distinction of sex. The traveller need not therefore, be surprised to find a very strong family likeness in the countenances of Santos Miguel, Rafael Gabriel, &c., for on analysing the matter, he will discover that they are all wrought on the model of the graceful feminine features of Biscay and Guipuscoa. Their effigies are either gilt, in the old tawdry toy style, or painted "as natural as life," or, more accurately speaking, "as death;" with the full, staring, black, unearthly eye, (the discordant living effect of which I have already remarked), which chills the startled spectator with all the horrors of the wax works. Another displeasing contrast in the natural relations of "the female form divine" in these provinces, is that which the arms, hands and face so frequently present. While the latter may be gazed upon as an assemblage of

—"all that's best of dark and bright,"

the former may be perceived to be very effective implements for the condensation and evolution of snow-balls, as aforesaid. It can't well be otherwise. Early toil and exposure to all varieties of weather and occupations, soon develop flexors and extensors, till the palms and digits expand on a scale of com-

prehensiveness strikingly at variance with an English estimate of fair proportions. I would advise travellers therefore to rest content with that lovely work of nature, the face; the hands are mere Brummagem articles, and have no pretensions to a place even amongst the fine arts. Passing across the Bidassoa ferry from Irun to Behobie I found "the daughter of the boat" quite as efficient as any of our *barkeros*. Wherever a push was the one thing needful, she jumped in and out upon the shallows like an amphibious animal; and again, she pulled her share of the rope along shore like a horse, to enable us to make head against the rapids. Out of gratitude for her exertions I shall say nothing about her arms; hands and feet, but I must own that I have not since beheld a brighter black eye, a more brilliant complexion, or so animated and attractive an expression of countenance.

The Basque children take to the water very early, and seem to enjoy it all life long. During the last siege of Bilbao, while the heavy rains interfered with all artillery movements on the hills—the battalions quartered at Olaveaga were in their element, boating on the river, singing, shouting and splashing each other to their hearts' content. The *barkeros* were to be pitied—their craft being in constant danger, and themselves allowed no voice in the matter, for the *soldados* claimed the

privilege of going ferry-free and drowning themselves if they pleased. I once stood for half an hour to behold the result of a pleasure trip of this kind, between Luchana and the Baya of Soroza. Twenty merry Navarrese jumped into a little ferry bark to cross to the Convent of Burseña, but had scarcely pushed off, when they began to rock the boat and to ship seas. The *barkero's* two children, a boy and girl of about eight and nine years old, had clung to the boat like leeches, to save it from injury if possible; and the effect of the danger on them, afforded the waggish crew additional amusement. The boy at the bow cried lustily with fear and vexation at the expected loss of his father's boat, while the girl at the stern beat the *soldados* vengefully with a rope's end. One at last fell over with laughter, and pulled two others in along with him. These held on by the gunwale to save themselves the trouble of swimming, and as they all pressed upon one side, the girl, whose soul seemed to be absorbed in the preservation of the boat, laid on them heavily with the rope; all the time cursing and scolding (in Spanish it is all one) in their very teeth, like a trooper. This was the height of fun for the *muchachos* within. They screamed and reeled with delight, till at length four or five of them rolled out at the other side. This restored something like a balance of power

and elbow room for operations. Their *cañanas* were ashore, so they defied all the powers of water. The ins made common cause against the outs, splashing and ducking them as they came within reach. The latter joined forces to assault and upset the boat, and if they had had a good Admiral amongst them would certainly have effected either the capsize or capture; but assaulting the bark, as the winds and waves did that which contained Cæsar and his fortunes, at all sides (*vide* Lucan), they just managed to counteract each other most hydrostatically, till the boy brought the boat ashore. Then the tug of war took place. Several scientific duck-wrestling matches came off the gunwale. 'Twas a point of honour with all the outs that the ins should join their party. The girl helped to heave the last stickler-for-place overboard, and then manfully pushed out alone to the centre of the river, where she set at nought threats, prayers and promises. She had fought for her father's boat, won it, and kept it too.

It was said that the Basque mountains would be likely to be crowded this season with British visitors who were preparing to steal a march over the Pyrenees to look at the interesting and extraordinary country beyond. Doubtless the gallant example set by Captain Henningsen, Lord Ranelagh, Count de Mortara, and others has

raised an emulous spirit that will not subside on the mere exorcism of Lord Palmerston, or the well-understood threat of "being practically interfered with" by his political friends the Spanish bondholders. Indeed, since the latter have taken to "intercepting" and forging private correspondence, and their coadjutors the French police have taken to persecuting English travellers on their way to and from the frontier, I have every hope that the proud sturdy spirit of independence and love of fair play which characterises John Bull will develop itself to some purpose, and lead to a re-action that may yet save the honour and interests of England from being wrecked on the shores of Biscay. In the meantime I am honoured with inquiries—"What preparations are to be made for travelling there?"—"Is it difficult to learn Basquense?"—And, lastly (I quote from the MS.)—"You don't mean to say seriously, there is any particular danger in making a tour of the provinces?"

First,—*it is* rather difficult to learn Basquense, inasmuch as the grammar is very defective, and it is spoken differently, not only in the several provinces, but in various parts of the same province; and I was assured that those who live at a distance can scarcely understand each other when they meet. There are several interesting speculations attaching to the remains of the Basque

language, such as it is, and its affinities to other languages, that must wait for a more favourable opportunity of comparison than I at present possess. In the meantime I am happy to state, for the comfort of travellers, that nearly all the peasantry speak Spanish also, and that with it alone, a stranger can manage to make himself understood almost everywhere. There are exceptions however. In the head Posada of Hernani, where I dined, there was a beautiful girl who waited at table, that did not understand the best native Spanish of my companions. There they sat, each like Owen Glendower, calling for spirits, but none did come! Now, as to the other point, "*particular danger?*"—*that* lies beyond my skill to answer satisfactorily. Much depends upon the talent of the traveller in finding or making it for himself as he goes along, especially if he moves with a camp. Some philosophers say that it is all ideal—others, that it is something real, and, more than that, inevitable—others, that there is a concatenation of powder, ball, wadding and range, which, whatever be the opinion of the honourable gentleman opposite—but I hate such knock-em-down arguments, and won't stand powder-monkey to any philosopher. Permit me instead, to offer a few suggestions, the result of my own experience in the provinces, and to wind up my narrative with a

chapter of advice, which, that it may have the greater chance of making a useful impression, I beg leave to address to the gentle reader personally.

In the first place, then, my dear fellow-countryman, don't think of seeing the country with a telescope from the walls of Bilbao or San Sebastian. The hills around stand sadly in the way, and the Columnar hunting parties indulged in by the garrison, which might have afforded opportunities for a wider scope of vision, are now few and far between. Besides, these excursions have invariably had unlucky terminations. "'Tis very pleasant," says the East Indian adage, "to hunt the tiger; but it is quite another affair when the tiger turns to hunt you!" It is, indeed, peculiarly mortifying to go for wool and to return shorn; so, try another plan. Throw aside your night-gown and slippers; abandon all your lingering hopes of travellers' comforts with a good grace; make your will; insure your life; find your way in the dark over the Pyrenees to Vera or Zugaramurdi; and then, having got at once into the midst of danger and hardship, you will soon learn to appreciate a thousand enjoyments that before passed unnoticed or despised. You will find your sense of natural piety quickened and elevated, and your tongue often uttering unconscious graces "for a good

dinner," or "a good bed," as the case may be, although the former should happen to be only bread and oil pottage, and the latter a mattress; *à propos* of dietetics, always take your breakfast, dinner, and supper, *when you can get them*—and your sleep (if possible) in advance! I am supposing that you are travelling with the Carlist forces, otherwise you will lose all the pleasure of beholding battles and sieges, the excitement of marching and counter-marching, of surprising and being surprised. Travelling alone, you will only see the towns, rivers, woods and mountains *asleep* as it were, and you might as well be looking at a book of landscapes at home; but if you follow the course of the war on any part of the frontier, you will find all these alive and alert: you will see the yards manned as it were,—every stick, stone and stream arranging themselves in sympathetic unison, and assuming their boldest defensive attitude, as if inspired by the unconquerable spirit of the people who have defended them ere history began.

But I was talking about your dinner and your bed.—Fight your way at once into the midst of the oil and garlic, devour them in token of victory over your own fastidiousness, and you will sit at your ease ever after. Get rid, also, of your childish predilection for white salt; the brown is quite as wholesome. It is only tinged

by a little clay dug out of the mine with it—or locked up in its crystallization from the well waters of Salinas del Oro. A little practice soon enables you to distinguish it from the pepper. The only danger of your indulging in Spanish cookery is, that you will soon become an epicure, and on your return to France astonish the *garçons*, as an English friend of mine did at Bayonne, by calling for salad oil “a little older” than that which stood in the cruet. Then as to a bed—I can promise you that you will not be likely to complain on your return to England of “a rose leaf doubled under your great toe” troubling your repose. However, if you are constitutionally fastidious (or thin-skinned, as the saying is) on this point, you cannot do better than get yourself varnished or enamelled for the season, as Madame V—— does, and then you may bid defiance to anything less irritating than a musket-ball. The late Sir Charles Giesecke adopted another excellent plan on his mineralogical excursions in Greenland. He provided a large white tanned bearskin, thick and strong, sewed into a bag, with a flap which covered his head. He crept in at the mouth every night, rolled himself round in a blanket, shut the flap door, and thus lay secure against the attacks of dogs, wolves, rats, mice, &c., the skin being tough enough to withstand an extemporaneous siege, till he awoke to beat the drum

with his knuckles, or shake his sides and growl at his disturbers. However, the less comforts you carry, the more good your journey will do you ; so don't trouble yourself about the bearskin. Indeed the less you bring in the way of baggage, the less you have to lose ; as you certainly will, one time or other, all that you can't carry on your own back.

Don't depend on your good horse for aid in time of need. He has not been used to a maize diet, and you will be obliged to send him back to France to save his life ; paying a Napoleon transit-duty by the way. Don't expect to replace him in the provinces. Every horse at all able to carry a man-at-arms, has been purchased for the army, or received in lieu of service or contributions from the owners ; so that only ponies remain, one of which at a pinch may serve you, if like the sailors in a storm, you lighten the vessel by throwing the cargo to the sharks. If indeed you can get a good mule and will feed it yourself (by stripping a house of its thatch, if nothing else can be had,) you may sit at ease in this respect. Take no care of your bridle or your neck. Carry saddle-bags, and put provision for to-day and to-morrow therein, otherwise you may both frequently dine on recollections of the previous meal. The actual necessities which you must bring with you are, a razor, a piece of soap, a comb, a tooth-brush, a square inch of

looking-glass (you will find white towels and napkins in the poorest huts, but they wash them with the ley of wood ashes,) a pair of spurs, (hinged, to enable you to walk down the precipitous roads without turning your face and toes thereunto,) a knife, fork and soup spoon, claspings in one haft, (a "scarce edition" in the provinces). I allow you a separate small spoon for eggs, as the customary hard-boiling plan which requires none, might not agree with your health. In your knapsack a second shirt, &c., and high shoes—not boots. You can't attempt to change wet boots in camp without the liability of being taken prisoner. A young friend of mine, who was roused out of bed at Olaveaga on Christmas morning, by the Christinos galloping under his window, was obliged to abandon both the operation and the boots, and afterwards to march for three leagues through the snow, over the sharp rocky mountains in his bare feet; all for want of shoes instead of boots. Next, a pocket map, telescope, note-book, and pencil; lastly, two articles which you may find difficult to procure when you want them, and which are very light and portable:—English lint and an empty phial. N.B. The latter will hold the lint; and don't forget the cork! The lint will be very useful whenever you are wounded. I assure you that many arms and legs are dressed without any in the hospitals, and you

will find none to spare in the provinces for amateurs. The phial is to be taken to the *Botica* for medicine as soon as the *Chacoli* (the wine of Biscay) disagrees with you. I at last learned to use it at dinner, as others did,—as wine with water, and vinegar with fish.—You need not take the trouble of bringing out medicine; you can always purchase it—excellent I assure you (the less the better;) but the *Boticario* is a man of dignity, and feels it beneath him to peddle in pill boxes and phials; so if you don't bring wherewith to hold his prescription, you may carry it home in the hollow of your hand, or in your mouth if you are not afraid of the consequences. Pray don't forget the cork!

Never enter a *Posada* except as a matter of necessity. Their Patrons are a *caste* of rogues and robbers in Spain as well as everywhere else; so the only safe plan to pursue, when the rascal presents his bill at you, and desires you to stand and deliver,—is, without looking at it, to seize him by the throat and drag him before the *Alcalde*, confident that he will find something enormously overcharged in it. If the fellow be insolent,—the *Alcalde* if he happen to be in a good humour, may order him a dozen *palos* on the back to teach him manners, and to keep his accounts on a better system. In justice to the Basque womankind I must say that I always found the *posadas* wherein

they held sway less exorbitant than those ruled by the other sex.

Dispense with the attendance of an *Assistente* unless you are very much occupied, very helpless, or very ignorant of Spanish and Basquense. There are times when you will wish him hanged; for instance, finding *par hazard* agreeable society where you flatter yourself you would be heartily welcome alone, and he is one too many; or, just when you have made yourself at home of a stormy night in some hospitable house on the mountains, amongst a kind and simple family, where everything promises comfort and sociality—you find gloomy silence on a sudden take place of song and laughter. Your hopeful *Assistente* has alluded to you as “*Señor Ingles,*” and you can hear them telling him in a whisper, how the patron’s son, and his own brother, and the patrona’s kinsman were all slaughtered by the *Inglese*s at San Sebastian, and Arlaban, and Hernani! and how their three houses were plundered and wantonly set fire to—until you are on the point of going to take your night’s lodging on the bare hill side for very shame at finding yourself classed in idea amongst a Legion of cut-throats—*Peseteros, Hombres comprados, Ladrones, Robadores, Borachios, Falsos, &c.* In such a predicament don’t attempt any explanation; the case won’t bear it. An independent primitive

people, with a constitution at least as good, and free and ancient as your own—as distinct in laws and language, character, form, pursuits and national feeling, from Spain, as Spain is from England,—are invaded by a horde of modern Norsemen, who, adding hypocrisy to systematic barbarity, capture or destroy all within their reach, in the name of liberty, and reform. The less said on the subject the better. Call yourself *Irlandés* or *Escocés*, Welshman, Manxman or Yorkshireman, as the case may be (I can't tell you the Spanish for the latter), but while the recent affairs of Bilbao, Irun and Hernani are rankling in their minds, do not go a pleasuring amongst them bearing the name of murderer on your forehead.

But I was speaking about your native *Assistente*. A good one in the ranks is really useful while you travel with the camp, in two respects. He will have your dinner ready to a moment, even if he pull down the door-post for fuel; and at night he will have the first Basque whisper of the enemy's movements, (sometimes before it reaches the General),—will have yourself out of bed, your things packed up, your horse at the door, and all ready to march in five minutes after; otherwise your first intimation of the matter may be a *reveillez* of musket balls through the chamber window, or the sight of the roof in flames. Not being able to find such a

treasure unengrossed, I did without one, depending on myself; and, certainly, underwent a very improving course of practice. Henceforward there will be still less likelihood of your finding a "help-meet" for such emergencies, as the Infante Don Sebastian has very wisely ordered that every *Assistente* able to bear arms, attached to civilians or to officers out of the camp,—shall instantly fall into the ranks and do duty on active service. Your cookery, &c., will therefore be left to the aged, the wounded, or the women; an excellent arrangement, by which Don Sebastian must have strengthened his army considerably, seeing that a number of the most active and intelligent men, hitherto selected by the idle *Señores oficiales* as lookers-on, have been brought up as a reinforcement to play the game on their own account; thus favouritism has been discountenanced, the ranks filled up, and a strong front presented to the enemy.

One more word of advice on the very important subject—your wardrobe. Your hat will be crushed to black lint in the pocket of the guide, as he crosses the frontier with you. Make a present of it to the nearest hospital, if you have a white supply of your own, and mount a *Boyna* instead—red, white, or blue (the red is the most military). Your surtout coat will wear out; but don't think of replacing it by Spanish cloth. This will shrink and

shrink, and shrink, till you can't get into it, however large it may be formed at first. The English cloth will yield you more comfort while one shred holds to another. When a general breaking up of its constitution is apparent, purchase either a long and broad cloak of coarse plaid carpet, which you can use as a blanket at night and a horse cloth by day; or, better still, (especially if you have no horse to share a blanket with) a *Zamarra* jacket, loose and full, formed of the curly Astracan lamb-skin reared in Andalusia, a year old, the black wool outside, and lined with white skin of similar age throughout. Nothing on earth is at once so comfortable and so serviceable. You cannot feel the cold of winter through it. It defies wind, rain, and snow. You may get a day's wetting in it; and, having shaken it well, may let it dry on your back with as little danger of taking cold as if you were a black ram. At night, if you are short of bed-clothes, it will fairly form the upper half. In summer you may throw it open or aside, hussar fashion, all day (unless the heat is too intense, and you find it useful to retain it, like an Irish surtout, to prevent being scorched); but the moment of sun-down, when the dew begins to let fall its malarian influences, fever, ague or rheumatism (you don't know which), on your chilled shoulders,—“Then, then is the moment” ('tis a theme for Tom

Moore) when you will turn once more, with all the ardour of a truant and repentant lover, to find refuge and consolation in the genial snow-white and ever-inviting arms of your neglected yet unoffending and unoffended *Zamarra*. If you can get one made for yourself, order it of a spencer length, and thus, whether riding, driving or walking, its beneficent protection will be extended even to your hips. Skirts are impracticable, but the spencer *Zamarra* is all-sufficient and imperishable. Even after *you* are worn out, it will make a serviceable knapsack for your executioners and assigns.

Now to descend and conclude. I perceive you regarding your perishables by anticipation? Well! let them wear out also. Patience, hear me out, if you please! I've a system. Trust not the Spanish loom, and increase not your baggage unnecessarily. Stand by British manufacture as long as possible, and when you can conscientiously take upon you to say that symptoms of approaching dissolution are perceptible, hasten to the leather-dressers, and purchase two skins of Cordovan: then take a tailor (prisoner, if necessary) home to your lodgings; get into bed, and make him sit down on a chair beside you—(Spanish tailors can sit) and arm your garment high and low, front and rear, *à la caballero*, at every assailable point and angle, before he leaves the chair. It will then be “better

than new;" and except you fall in for share of a shower of grape shot, you will be independent of the *Sastre* for three years, or thereabouts. Surmounted by your *Zamarra* and *Boyna*, you will form a proper *Faccioso* figure, presentable at court, in camp, on Prado, and also (if you feel equal to the undertaking) at the "national and characteristic" village ball on Sunday evenings, when hundreds join hands for the *Culada*. Seeing you thus attired and occupied, the kind-hearted people will soon forget that you belong to the race of northern barbarians who infest their coasts, and ere long, will learn to look on you as one of themselves:—not equal in blood, of course (for who can vie in ancestral and heraldic honours with the peasantry of Biscay?)—but as a person who has good taste and good sense enough to come and be happy amongst them, and learn a Basque lesson how to fight for his King and Country.

APPENDIX.

(A.)

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN LORD RANELAGH
AND LORD JOHN HAY.

LORD RANELAGH TO LORD JOHN HAY.

Bayonne, Jan. 15, 1837.

MY LORD,—On my arrival in this town yesterday, I was credibly informed that your Lordship had expressed yourself in very forcible terms against me for the part I am supposed to have taken against the forces of his Britannic Majesty, whilst with General Eguia at the siege of Bilbao. I should not presume to write to your Lordship respecting a rumour having no foundation in fact, and evidently originating in mistake, but that the mere mention of such a charge is of too serious a nature to be passed over without refutation. Report says your Lordship has been informed and impressed with the

belief that I have been seen in a Carlist battery, which is said to have fired against his Britannic Majesty's ships. I can assure your Lordship that, during the late siege of Bilbao, most positive orders were given by the Infante Don Sebastian, that under no circumstances whatever should they be fired upon. I am confident that had the crews of the British men-of-war wished to come peaceably ashore, as they were in the habit of doing during the first siege, they would have experienced as much attention and kindness as they then did at the hands of Zumalacarregui. I have since heard with regret, that one or two shots, fired by a twenty-four pounder, which was advanced to the old powder magazine near the bridge of Luchana, on the 23rd of December, to bear on Fort Desierto and the Spanish gun-boats, accidentally struck his Britannic Majesty's brig *Saracen*. This mischance would, in all probability, not have occurred, had General Eguia considered it safe, or indeed possible, to send a message to the British Commander, to request the removal of his vessel; remembering, as he did, the reckless barbarity exhibited some days previously towards an officer of his, who was shot from the walls of Bilbao while bearing a flag of truce, with an answer to the British Consul there. I presume that this battery (the only one which could actually bear upon the position under Fort

Desierto, where the British vessel lay) is the particular one in which it was supposed that I had been seen at such a time. Now, I beg to inform your Lordship, I was never in that battery while it was firing at Fort Desierto, or at the Spanish shipping in the anchorage below. I must add, that viewing as I did the retired and quiescent positions which his Britannic Majesty's vessels maintained throughout, I, up to the hour of the decisive attack on Luchana and Monte de Cabras, never contemplated the probability of their acting under the orders of General Espartero, and in consequence was, together with other Englishmen, nearly brought into collision with them on the night of the 24th ult. Indeed it was not until yesterday that I was made acquainted with the fact that his Britannic Majesty's Naval force had taken an active part on that occasion; and I can confidently state that the whole Carlist camp was equally destitute of any certain information of the actual co-operation either of his Britannic Majesty's forces or those of the Legion from San Sebastian. The feelings and principles which have led me to volunteer my humble but zealous support in the cause of Don Carlos and the persecuted Basque peasantry (the cause at once of legitimate monarchy and constitutional rights) are, I trust, of a true English stamp; and, acting on them as I did, unfettered by professional service,

unmoved by the vindictive feelings of a civil strife, or by the mercenary considerations which have urged a crowd of reckless adventurers to stain the shores of Guipuscoa with the blood of its brave inhabitants, I had hoped that I had thereby given a sufficient guarantee in the eyes of every candid and fair-judging Englishman, that I was not likely to be found ranging myself under the banners of revolution and anarchy, treason or spoliation, in any country; still less of wilfully incurring the deep dishonour of defying the flag of my own sovereign. Seriously misrepresented as I now find my conduct has been, I may take the liberty of reminding your Lordship, that since my arrival in Biscay I have not been unmindful of the interests and honour of England, and that my first act was to appeal to the good feelings of Don Carlos on behalf of the rights of humanity, and to obtain from him the truly gratifying concession that the Durango decree should be abrogated so far as it concerned my country, and that the British cockade should be inviolably respected—a concession which I had the honour to transmit to your Lordship's immediate notice, through Captain Maitland, of his Britannic Majesty's ship *Tweed*. Then, and not till then, I freely and unconditionally lent my humble aid in the field on several occasions, against his revolted subjects—a liberty of action which I believe your Lordship will

not venture to assert is in anywise contrary to the laws of England, in relation to the two belligerent powers of Spain. However, not knowing the extent of the misrepresentations which may have been made to your Lordship, I can only say that if any further explanation appears necessary to your Lordship, I shall be happy to afford it, confident that on arriving at the truth, your Lordship will cheerfully do me the justice which I feel indispensable to my character as a soldier and a Briton.

I have the honour to remain your Lordship's obedient, humble servant,

RANELAGH.

To Lord John Hay, Commodore
commanding, &c.

P.S. Since I wrote the above, I have learned that the inimical reports which others spread against me, having been unfortunately accredited by your Lordship, have acquired a degree of publicity which renders it necessary that I should as publicly protest against them. Your Lordship will, therefore please to consider your reply as a document which in the course of my own justification I may find it necessary to give to the world.

LORD RANELAGH TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST, ENCLOSING THE CORRESPONDENCE FOR PUBLICATION.

Bayonne, Jan. 26.

SIR,—On reading over my letter of the 15th instant, I perceive that the following passage requires some further explanations, viz. “Viewing as I did the retired and quiescent positions which his Britannic Majesty’s vessels maintained throughout, I up to the hour of the decisive attack on Luchana and Monte de Cabras, never contemplated the probability of their acting under the orders of General Espartero, and in consequence was, together with other Englishmen, nearly brought into collision with them on the night of the 24th ultimo.” This may perhaps appear at variance with the reports received in England of the active efforts of the combined forces to raise the siege of Bilbao; but really the very singular tactics adopted by his Britannic Majesty’s co-operative armament on the occasion, left the Carlists in perfect ignorance of what they had to expect from them. The plain facts are these: his Britannic Majesty’s brig *Ringdove* lay at anchor during the greater part of the siege in the Bilbao river, between Fort Desierto

and Portugalete, within half musket shot of the Carlists, where, had she been considered as an enemy, she could have been seriously injured, and perhaps destroyed. It was rumoured that she had fired three or four shots ashore ; and a great sensation was created in the Carlist camp at the idea of such a gratuitous outrage, during a state of virtual neutrality and mutual forbearance, where no provocation had been given ; but these shots were afterwards discovered to be nothing more than signals to steamers in the offing, and nothing of retaliation was attempted or thought of. His Britannic Majesty's brig *Saracen* lay further up the river, moored till the very last under Fort Desierto. This fort and the Spanish gun-boats were almost daily engaged with the Carlists, yet the *Saracen*, which lay in the midst of the latter, took no ostensible part in these contests, but (as it now appears) sent her crews to work the guns in the fort, whilst she herself continued to be quietly at anchor, apparently neutral and harmless. Had either vessel acted openly on the offensive the Carlists would have known with whom they had to deal, and I should have withdrawn to another part of the provinces. Their first undisguised act of hostility occurred in the decisive attack on the bridge of Luchana and Monte de Cabras ; yet even there escaped recognition, enveloped as they were in storm and dark-

ness, whilst surprising the all-confiding Carlists. General Villarreal's report of the affair, in which no mention whatever is made of the co-operation of British troops or vessels, will sufficiently substantiate the fact. I cannot conclude my letter without bearing testimony to the humanity of the brave Basque people, and to their forbearance under very severe provocation. So far from their mode of warfare being sanguinary or barbarous, as interested enemies, both Spanish and English, are constantly proclaiming, I can (as well as other Englishmen, spectators of their proceedings during the last campaign) vouch that it has been carried on upon a far more civilised system than the British public have hitherto been permitted to believe. Indeed, speaking from my own knowledge of all that occurred at the siege of Bilbao, I feel myself warranted in declaring that they (the Carlists) act upon much more humane principles than their opponents, who seemed to neglect no opportunity of indulging in outrage.

Yours obediently,

RANELAGH.

LORD JOHN HAY TO LORD RANELAGH.

His Majesty's Ship Phoenix, Passages,
Jan. 25, 1837.

MY LORD,—In reference to your Lordship's letter of the 15th instant, I have to acquaint you that I received information that several British subjects, amongst whom your Lordship was named, were acting with the insurgent army during the late siege of Bilbao, and the operations on the banks of the Nervion. Those operations lasted several weeks, and during the whole of which period six vessels belonging to his Majesty's squadron, and many boats, with their flags always displayed, were actively and prominently employed in co-operating with her Catholic Majesty's forces against the insurgents, for the relief of Bilbao, and the protection of the persons and property of British subjects.

It therefore became my duty to direct the senior officer in command of his Majesty's ships stationed in that river to make every inquiry as to the authenticity of such reports; the result has been to prove that your Lordship took an active part in the attack on Bilbao, and the operations on that river.

As to any reports to which you allude of expressions having fallen from me, I will observe, that

all my observations have been founded on the above facts. Your Lordship is perfectly mistaken if you imagine that I have endeavoured to ascertain the particular battery or position in which your presence or exertions were employed. I never considered this a point of the least importance : my object was to ascertain correctly, for the information of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, what Englishmen (if any) were acting with the Pretender's troops when the British flag was co-operating with her Catholic Majesty's forces, leaving it to the British government to institute such proceedings as they may deem proper.

Captain Maitland informs me that no such communication has ever reached him as that alluded to in your letter respecting an alleged abrogation of a part of the Durango decree, nor is it of any consequence, as that barbarous document never appeared to me to direct the murder of those serving under the British flag who might have fallen into the hands of the Pretender's troops.

As your Lordship has thought fit to address to me in no very measured terms, certain remarks on the motives which you assume to have actuated the officers and men of the British Auxiliary Legion to enter the service of her Catholic Majesty, I have thought proper to forward a copy of your letter to the officer commanding that force.

I have been impelled by a sense of public duty to place before his Majesty's government the facts to which my letter refers. Such being the case, your Lordship will see the impossibility of my carrying on any correspondence on this subject beyond this statement, which puts your Lordship in possession of the official steps I have taken.

I am, my Lord, &c.,

(Signed)

JOHN HAY.

The Lord Ranelagh, &c., &c.

NOTE by the EDITOR, 13th July, 1837.—It is only since the completion of this work, that I have been informed of a circumstance which throws an unexpected light on the difficulty expressed in Vol. I. page 131, with respect to what appeared to me the ante-date of the Royal order exempting the forces of his Britannic Majesty from the denunciations of the Durango decree. I have however lately been assured, (on authority which I cannot doubt) that the Royal British Marines were excepted from the penalties of the Durango Decree, (published the 10th of June 1835,)—by a Royal Order dated on the 15th of July 1836, at Villafranca (not Vil-

larel) de Guipuscoa; which order was immediately communicated, not only to all the Carlist Generals and principal officers on the coast, but to all the diplomatic agents of Don Carlos abroad. However, it was not made public;—nay, it was, I am informed, communicated with the injunction that it should be kept secret, for two reasons:—1st, to prevent the beneficial preventive effects anticipated from the publication of the Durango Decree (the cessation of enlistment for the service of Isabella, in Great Britain and Ireland), being counteracted by a large shipment of Royal Marines instead of the obnoxious Legion:—2ndly, to avoid exciting the indignation which such an act of mercy (towards the troops of a nation taking a hostile part against a people who never injured them), would have aroused in the minds of the greater number of the partizans of Don Carlos.

The fact appears to be, that Don Carlos and his Minister were less anxious about acquiring the reputation of a merciful administration, than actually practising mercy as far as it could *safely* be conceded, amidst the excitements of the war of extermination waged against them.

It certainly seems somewhat singular, that Señor Erro should not have explained the actual state of the case to Lord Ranelagh in all their discussions on the principle and policy of the

Durango Decree as affecting all parties; during which the minor point of the claims of the British cockade might very naturally have been taken for granted by his Lordship, to be virtually involved in the greater.

Lord Ranelagh was (as well as myself) undoubtedly permitted to remain under the impression that *he* had obtained from Don Carlos “the truly gratifying concession that the Durango Decree should be abrogated so far as it concerned the British cockade,”—a misconception, the accountability for which certainly rests with Señor Erro, and arose, I can now well believe, from a mere *equivoque* in the partial explanations which the Minister was able to afford his Lordship, under the very “peculiar position” in which he stood with respect to the secret Royal Order.

Since my return to London, my attention having been particularly called to this point of Lord Ranelagh’s letter, I made (in his Lordship’s absence at Rome) all possible inquiries within the very limited time allowed me to complete this Appendix (after the first volume had gone to press), as to the causes of the mistake;—and have received the following explanation from authority on which I can place implicit reliance:—

“Lord Ranelagh, in October 1836, being at Durango, had some interviews with Señor Erro on the

subject of that Decree. In one, *at last*, the minister, who could not, according to his instructions, tell Lord Ranelagh the real fact of the existing order,—said to him in French:—‘*Eh bien ! quant à la cocarde Anglaise, nous avons pourvu : nous avons arrangé tout cela !*’ (Well ! As to the English cockade, we have provided about that. We have arranged all that !) These expressions conveyed to his Lordship the idea that it was owing to *his* exertions that those arrangements were made ; and as a loyal British subject he felt naturally proud of it ; while the minister was alluding with diplomatic skill to the existing order of the 15th July preceding.”

The following highly illustrative letter from a gentleman who was present at the siege of Bilbao, was elicited by the late parliamentary debates which arose on the motion of Sir Henry Hardinge, Bart. on the 17th of April, 1837.

“That an humble address be presented to his Majesty, praying that he would be graciously pleased not to renew the Order in Council of the 10th of June 1835, granting his Majesty’s royal license to British subjects to enlist into the service of the Queen of Spain, which order in Council will expire

on the 10th of June next; and praying also that his Majesty will be graciously pleased to give directions that the Marine forces of his Majesty shall not be employed in the civil contest now prevailing in Spain, otherwise than in that Naval co-operation which his Majesty has engaged to afford if necessary, under the stipulations of the treaty."

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE MORNING POST.

"SIR,—As the statement made officially by the Earl of Minto in the recent debate on Spanish affairs, that his Britannic Majesty's Naval forces acted openly as belligerents during the whole time of the siege of Bilbao, is calculated to fix the stigma of having borne arms against his national flag upon every Englishman who, like myself, may have been at that time serving with the Carlist army,—may I request the favour of a small space in your valuable column for a few remarks upon the character of the operations in the River Nervion.

"It was observed by his Lordship on the occasion to which I have referred, that the inference drawn by the Duke of Wellington, from a letter of Lord Ranelagh, descriptive of the position of the British squadron at Bilbao, was by no means borne out; that he (Lord Minto) was glad of an opportunity of stating that the King's forces at Bilbao were acting

openly in co-operation with the Legion; that the Fort of Desierto was garrisoned by mariners, who were daily firing upon those Carlists who came within range of their guns; that the vessels in the river were daily exposed to the firing of the Carlists, as well as the boats of his Britannic Majesty's squadron, which, with their colours always displayed, were employed in keeping up the communications between Bilbao and the sea. That there was no truth whatever in the report that the British squadron took shelter under the character of neutrality; on the contrary, they appeared in the character of open belligerents, as they were.

“With regard to these observations of the noble Earl, allow me to say that his Lordship must either have taken a hastily-conceived and most incorrect view of the actual nature of the British operations in the river Nervion previously to the 24th of December, or else the official report upon which the above-mentioned statements were founded, was strangely at variance with fact, as far at least as could be ascertained through the most diligent and unremitting inquiries on the part of the English with the Carlist army, who naturally felt the deepest anxiety to avoid all collision with the forces of their Sovereign, by which I mean the Royal Marines and seamen; for such single and isolated artillerymen as were from time to time seen in the town of

Bilbao, at Portugalete, or elsewhere, were supposed to belong to General Evans's Legion, for we had not contemplated the employment of the British Royal Artillery under the terms of 'naval co-operation' stipulated in the Quadruple Treaty. I am, therefore, ready to come forward and give in the most solemn and unequivocal manner my corroboration of every statement in the letter of Lord Ranelagh which was alluded to by the Duke of Wellington, and I am sure I can answer for the same readiness to bear the like testimony on the part of those of my countrymen who were then with the Carlists.

"The noble Earl stated, in the first instance, that his Britannic Majesty's forces had acted in open co-operation with the Legion. I shall not refer to any other operations than those in the river Nervion, and previous to the attack in the dark on the bridge of Luchana and Monte de Cabras on the 24th of December. If then, by this *open co-operation* is meant the conveying backwards and forwards by the boats of his Britannic Majesty's squadron of the Christino troops from one side of the river to the other in the neighbourhood of Portugalete, and out of the range of the Carlist batteries, such co-operation, unaccompanied by any act of offensive hostility, was undoubtedly afforded.

“ The next point is the employment of the Royal Marines in working the guns of Fort Desierto, whilst the vessels to which they belonged, as well as their boats were constantly exposed to the retaliatory fire of the Carlists. That the marines and seamen were so employed we subsequently learned to be true, but during the time there was no means of ascertaining whilst the Spanish flag was flying above Fort Desierto, that British naval forces, and not troops of the Queen Dowager of Spain, were thus acting as belligerents behind stone walls, whilst their vessels, apparently without a soul on board, lay quietly at anchor, secured save by accidental misdirection, from the Carlist shot, by the protection of their neutral flag, as it was then considered, so far at least as offensive operations were concerned.

“ As for the boats of the squadron which were alleged to have been fired upon by the Carlists whilst employed with the British colours displayed, in keeping up the communications, I can only say such acts of aggression on the part of the Carlists must have taken place during the night, or under some other circumstances, which prevented the flag from being distinguished; indeed, so scrupulous were the Carlists to avoid direct hostilities with the British squadron, that the Infante Don Sebastian

had, it was universally known amongst the Royalist army, requested of the General-in-chief that even if an aggressive shot should be fired from the men-of-war it should not be returned.

“ I trust I have now said sufficient to show that, if it can be proved by the evidence of every Englishman who took part with the besieging army the facts are as I have stated, the concluding remarks of Lord Minto relative to the character of open belligerents assumed by his Britannic Majesty’s forces are wholly unsupported by what actually took place; for I must be permitted to maintain, with all deference to the Noble Earl, that his Britannic Majesty’s forces were in all appearance strictly neutral, and that they were on no occasion previous to the attack on Luchana, considered as belligerents in an offensive sense.

“ I shall make no comment as to whether such manner of carrying on warlike operations be either chivalrous or generous, but shall merely repeat that I neglected no opportunity of obtaining for my own satisfaction, the earliest and most accurate intelligence of the British movements, and that what I have been able to collect fully justifies me in corroborating every statement made in the letter quoted by the Duke of Wellington, and which gave his Grace occasion to infer that the conduct pursued by

his Britannic Majesty's naval forces was neither fair nor honourable as between nation and nation. I have the honour to be, Sir, your very obedient servant,

“S. M. HUMPHREYS.”

“Brussels, April 28th, 1837.”

(B.)

THE following document is interesting as illustrative of the spirit of conciliation and mercy which actuated Don Carlos and his ministry at the period when the siege of Bilbao was commenced under Villarreal, in October, 1836.

“ROYAL ARMY.

“By an order which I have this day received from his Excellency the General-in-Chief of the Armies of the King, under date of the 25th of the present month, I am instructed to communicate to all those who have been expelled from the kingdom, or sent to other provinces, that they are hereby permitted to return to the bosom of their families, without fear or alarm.

“As you are comprised in this order, I hasten

to make it known to you that you may take such steps as you may think necessary.

“God protect you.

“JOSE MARIA DE AGUIRRE, *Com.*”

“Arciniega, Oct. 25, 1836.

“To Don Jose Antonio de Oladia, and Don
Juan Antonio de Yturribarria, Bayonne.”

OCTOBER SIEGE OF BILBAO, 1836.

The French journals published the following bulletin extraordinary, addressed to the Minister of War, at Madrid, by the Christino Commandante at Bilbao. The translation varies in several places from that which fell into my hands, (alluded to at Vol. I. page 220) and I cannot say which is the correct one ; not having seen the Spanish original.

“EXCELLENT SIR,—After a siege which lasted six days, and which, during the last three, was more destructive than any ever yet recorded in the annals of history, the enemy abandoned their senseless attempt with as much opprobrium and disgrace to themselves as glory to this heroic town, and its brave defenders. Two of our principal batteries had been dismantled, after six hours’ continual

firing, and all the artillery-men who had served the guns had been put *hors de combat*, and were more or less severely wounded. Nevertheless the breach opened by the enemy's fire was defended throughout the day, by a small number of infantry, who, in spite of the losses sustained by their ranks from the Carlist batteries, never once thought of seeking shelter, and manfully disputed every inch of ground.

“The enemy thinking it easy to storm the place, by means of the access presented by the walls in ruin, made a reconnoissance under the walls at eleven o'clock in the evening, arriving as far as the parapet; but the garrison charged the assailants with unexampled intrepidity, and forced them to give way, and the enemy falling back left under the ramparts a number of men killed and wounded. Their losses in this attack amounted to two hundred men. This attempt, followed by several partial attacks, which were continued throughout the night, prevented the batteries from being re-established with the requisite solidity, and on the following day it was not only impossible to discharge these batteries, but others were also hit by the enemy's shot; two more were dismantled, and thus was opened an entire line of attack without guns, and defended only by the infantry,

which pressed upon the ruined walls. During the night the enemy made preparations for a new attack; and on our side we prepared to defend the place, but the attack was not made. The efforts of the leaders themselves were unable to triumph over the panic of the soldiers. Profiting during the night by this momentary tranquillity, and by the cessation of hostilities, which was no doubt occasioned by the rain that fell in torrents, we worked with redoubled activity at the reparation of the works, into which a breach had been made, and at the erection of new ones. On the following day all the batteries, established with the same solidity as before the siege, opened upon those of the enemy so well-directed a fire, that at four o'clock in the evening the whole of the Carlist artillery was silenced. The severe experience gained by the enemy, during these three days, convinced them of the impossibility of taking the place without annihilating the whole of its brave defenders. They accordingly decided upon withdrawing the whole of their artillery. Of this fact we were assured last night. The whole line of the batteries has been abandoned, and merely a few battalions of infantry occupy the same position as before.

“ All the divisions of the Army and the Na-

tional Guards have done their duty admirably, and have vied with each other in zeal and courage; the brilliant and multiplied proofs of which I shall lay before your Excellency as soon as I am sufficiently at liberty to address a minute report of them to you. I now merely inform your Excellency, that I am proud of commanding such valiant troops, to whose heroic intrepidity in the midst of peril no language can do justice. Their conduct has been, in every respect, worthy of a signal testimony of the royal munificence. I should be wanting in my duty if, in spite of the short time at my disposal, I neglected to state to your Excellency the misfortunes of this town, which is so worthy of peculiar attention, both from its patriotism and its sufferings. For the second time, its inhabitants have given to the world an admirable proof of their patriotic enthusiasm, regardless of their lives, and solicitous only of preserving their honour.

“The damage occasioned by the former siege was considerable, but the losses sustained from the present have been far greater. The project of the Carlists was to gratify the thirst of private vengeance on Bilbao—a plan worthy of the men by whom it was entertained—worthy of the Bishop of Leon, Eguia, and the Marquis de Valde

Espina. The framers of the plan witnessed the sufferings to which the town was exposed, and yet collected around it all the elements of destruction. From the commencement to the termination of the siege, the enemy directed 2,000 incendiary projectiles against the town, which, for three days, was exposed to this shower of fire, and thus completely ruined and disfigured. Not a single house has escaped without injury of some sort. Furniture, goods, the wealth accumulated by industry and trade, all have been destroyed or buried in a heap of ruins. The loss is estimated at several millions, and yet in the midst of the scene of devastation and mourning, not a murmur of complaint was heard. Men and women—in a word, the whole population—were occupied only with repulsing the enemy, and whilst their ruin was being completed their only care was to furnish the defenders of the place with supplies and assistance. An observer might have availed himself of this opportunity of witnessing a repetition of the sublime traits which immortalised the heroic ages of Rome and Sparta.

“As I have already announced to your Excellency, I will shortly lay before you more ample details of the operations of the siege, as it would be unjust to deprive a number of honourable citizens of the praises and the recompenses which are their due.

From this moment I may assure your Excellency, that with Spaniards like those in the town of Bilbao, the cause of the Usurper will never triumph, nor will the throne of her Majesty Isabella II. and the liberties of the country be ever endangered.

God preserve you.

“ARRAOZ.”

(A true copy.)

“Bilbao, October 29.”

(C.)

FROM GENERAL COUNT DE CASA EGUIA TO THE
MINISTER OF WAR.

EXCELLENT SIR,—It is with grief that I communicate to you the enclosed report of the perfidious conduct of the besieged against an officer sent as a parliamentary. It was unworthy of the Spanish character, and a poor recompense for the generosity shown by the troops of his Majesty in sparing the lives of a garrison of 300 men, taken by assault in fort San Mamès. Be pleased to lay this before his Majesty.

God protect your Excellency.

Count de CASA EGUIA.

Camp before Bilbao, Nov. 11.

To the Minister of War.

FROM BRIGADIER ZARATEIGUI TO GENERAL EGUIA.

EXCELLENT SIR,—My Adjutant, Don Mariano Sanz, presented himself in the usual forms of a *parlementario* before the gate of San Agustin, of Bilbao, in order to deliver two despatches forwarded to me by your Excellency: one from the Universal Minister, and the other from your Excellency, both addressed to the Consul of his Britannic Majesty residing in that town. He had ordered the trumpet to be sounded for the fourth time, when the besieged fired at him several shots, one of which seriously wounded him. He, however, succeeded in getting away, and was led to my quarters, where he remains.

The despatches and his *boyna* (cap) remained behind.

God protect your Excellency.

JUAN ANTONIO ZARATEIGUI.

Deusto, Nov. 11th.

To General Count de Casa Eguia.

GENERAL SARASA'S REPORT OF A SORTIE FROM
BILBAO.

EXCELLENT SIR,—This morning, at half-past twelve o'clock, I quitted Zamudio for the heights

of San Domingo, to reconnoitre the line. At one o'clock I learnt that the enemy, 2,000 in number, had made a sortie from Bilbao, with the intention of getting possession of the above mentioned heights and burning a number of houses. I hastened my march, and gave orders that six companies of the 4th battalion, stationed at Derio and Zamudio, should, with all possible expedition, advance and reinforce those of the 6th battalion who were protecting the heights.

I arrived on the ground at half-past one. The advanced posts had already opened fire and were retreating on San Domingo, pursued by the enemy. At this moment, the flank companies of the 6th battalion, with their Commandante at their head, charged the enemy with such vigour, that although considerably superior in numbers they were obliged to retreat on Begoña, as far as the point called 'the Rotura.' Here again the enemy had to sustain a heavy fire from one of our batteries, supported by some companies of the 6th battalion, intrenched behind a wall on the high road. The companies belonging to the 4th battalion now making their appearance, the enemy were again attacked, compelled to abandon all their positions—and to retreat disgracefully at four o'clock, p.m., pursued by our brave troops, notwithstanding the heavy firing of their forts; they however suc-

ceeded in setting fire to some houses at Uribarri and others near to our batteries.

The loss of the enemy must be considerable; several of their dead were left on the field of battle, and they carried away a great many wounded. Our loss is insignificant. The valour of our soldiers is above all praise.

God protect your Excellency.

JUAN MANUEL SARASA.

Head-quarters, Galdacano, Nov. 23, 1836.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL BRUNO DE VILLARREAL'S REPORT OF
THE REPULSE OF ESPARTERO AT CASTREJANA.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The arms of his Majesty have obtained another day of glory. At break of day Espartero assembled the whole of his forces at Sestao, and advancing by the Desierto, crossed a bridge which he had thrown in front of San Nicolas, and took the direction of Burceña by Baracaldo. I had taken up my position from the bank of the river near Burceña to the bridge of Castrejana, covering the fords Ibarza, Achandia, Zuvilleta, Ibargoche, and Puertorico; and from Alonsotegui

to Sodupe and Oguendo. I left Brigadier Don Prudencio Sopelana to defend the bridge of Castrejana with the flank company of the 2nd battalion of Guipuscoa, and the 1st, 4th, and 5th of Alava. I also placed at the bridge of Alonsotegui the commander of the 1st battalion of Alava, with three companies of his battalion; the bridge of Lacuarde was intrusted to the commander of the 4th battalion, with three companies belonging to his own battalion and the 5th. The bridge of Burceña was defended by the commander of the 8th battalion of Biscay, with his battalion.

These dispositions taken, I hastened to the advanced guard commanded by Don Castor Andechaga, and composed of the 7th battalion of Biscay. The instant I arrived (mid-day) the firing commenced from the heights, near the convent of Burceña. After a short time I made a feigned retreat, in hopes of drawing my opponents towards the bridge of Castrejana. The enemy's line at that time extended along the whole of my front, and the fire was general.

The enemy now attempted to force the passage by the bridge of Castrejana and the fort of Zuvilleta; but our men, placed on the bridge, charged them at the point of the bayonet, and drove them from the houses, the heights, and the Hermitage of Santa Agueda, and even got possession of the

last mentioned height, notwithstanding a strong resistance.

At dusk, the enemy were flying in disorder. We are still pursuing them. We have already made several prisoners, and got possession of ammunition, gun carriages, and mules laden with baggage.

Our loss is trifling; that of the enemy must be considerable, for the field of battle was covered with their dead.

I remain on the lines in order to give them a warm reception should they again attempt to advance.

BRUNO DE VILLARREAL.

Heights of Castrejana, Nov. 27.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL COUNT DE CASA EGUIA'S REPORT OF
THE ATTACK ON SAN AGUSTIN.

EXCELLENT SIR,—Agreeably to my report of last night, the firing against the convent of San Agustin commenced this morning at half-past nine.

The bridge of Burceña has been broken down, it being my opinion that the division of Espartero will endeavour to force that passage; I have rein-

forced the party defending the bridge with two battalions and two pieces of eight.

God protect your Excellency.

Count de CASA EGUIA.

Head-quarters, Olaveaga, Nov. 27, 1836.

To the Minister of War.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The firing against the convent of San Agustin continued this afternoon, but having heard the fire of Espartero's column, which was attacking our positions, I gave orders to the Commandant-General of the Engineers and the Commandant of the line instantly to take San Agustin by assault, whilst with the whole of my disposable force I advanced on Burceña.

I have not time to send your Excellency any details. I am, however, happy to inform you that our efforts have been crowned with success; the enemy has been repulsed and beaten, and the convent of San Agustin taken by assault.

We were only able to save 75 prisoners; *the loss of the enemy is serious*. I have sent the prisoners to the Commandant-General of Biscay, that they may be forwarded to the depôt; I have also

sent 24 prisoners wounded to the hospital of Munguia.

God protect your Excellency.

Count de CASA EGUIA.

Head-quarters, Olaveaga, Nov. 27, 1836.

To the Minister of War.

FROM THE MARQUIS DE VALDE-ESPINA ON THE
VICTORIES OF THE 27TH NOV.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The enemy has been beaten and repulsed by our brave troops on the bridge of Castrejana, and a ford of Zuvilleta.

San Agustin has been taken by assault. Our volunteers gave proofs of courage beyond all description; they actually advanced in the midst of burning materials, and the destructive fire of bombs and granades. A great many of the enemy were sacrificed to the vengeance of our soldiers—75 only were saved. Many Christinos were burnt to death in the convent, which was set fire to by their comrades.

We have also got possession of a fortified ancient palace, and a house adjoining it.

God protect your Excellency.

Marquis de VALDE-ESPINA.

Deusto, Nov. 27, 1836.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL VILLARREAL'S REPORT OF THE SECOND
VICTORY AT CASTREJANA.

EXCELLENT SIR,—Desirous of giving fresh vigour to our operations, I ordered Brigadier Castor Andechaga to put himself at the head of the seventh battalion of Biscay, and to turn, very early this morning, the position of the heights of Santa Agueda, situated on our left. This movement was well executed, and at nine o'clock the fire was opened. The enemy, in great force, occupied the chain of mountains which descend to the convent of Burceña, and apparently had the intention of forming *en masse* near that point; but the sudden appearance of our guerillas on their flank, and four companies, commanded by Brigadier Prudencio Sopelana on the rear guard, threw the Christinos into such confusion that they fled in the greatest disorder.

Wishing to take advantage of this state of things, I ordered the river to be crossed at the ford Zuvilleta, by General Simon de la Torre, with the tenth battalion, and Don Juan Antonio Zaratiegui; whereupon they speedily got possession of the opposite bank. The positions nearest to

Burceña were thus in our power. Here, notwithstanding the fire of the enemy, our troops formed in column, and the flank companies were able to join the guerillas of Castor Andechaga. The rear guard of the enemy was now surrounded by our brave fellows, and compelled to fly towards the advanced guard. It was impossible to pursue them any further, for there they were protected by two squadrons of cavalry, Fort del Desierto, a steam boat, and three *Trincaduras*.

Espartero has left behind him a stain on his character greater than his disgraceful defeat. The village of Baracaldo, and all the houses in the vicinity were set on fire; amidst the smoke arising, we saw the cowards retreating towards Portugalete and Zamorosta, pursued by the cries and groans of the unfortunate beings thus driven to despair—innocent victims of the most atrocious barbarity!

This afternoon I reconnoitred the field of battle occupied by the enemy, and the quantity of dead bodies which covered it, proved that his loss during yesterday and to-day must have been very considerable—all which I shall send your Excellency a detailed account of as soon as I shall have collected the particulars. In the mean time, however, I must make known to your Excellency that all the chiefs, officers and soldiers have fulfilled their duty, and that I have been personally supported

in the points of greatest danger, yesterday and to-day, by Generals la Torre, Don Alonso Cuevilas, and the Count da Madeira; the Lieutenant-Colonel Count de Mortara, and the Brigadiers Don Juan Antonio Guergué, Don Ignacio Lardizabal, and Don Basilio Antonio Garcia,—not omitting the General Staff of the army, and its excellent Chief Don Antonio Urbiztondo.

God protect your Excellency.

BRUNO DE VILLARREAL.

Heights of Castrejana, Nov. 28th.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL COUNT CASA EGUIA'S REPORT OF THE
ATTACK ON THE CONVENT OF THE CONCEPTION.

EXCELLENT SIR,—By my report of this morning your Excellency will have learned that the enemy continued retreating, pursued by our troops. The firing has now ceased, and I have thought the moment opportune to summon the town to surrender on the terms hereafter mentioned. As yet I have received no answer; they promise to send a reply to-morrow. In the mean time I have caused a fresh battery to be constructed to destroy Fort Conception. I shall then be enabled to take in flank

the whole of the defences of the enemy.—God protect your Excellency.

Count de CASA EGUIA.

Head-Quarters, Olaveaga, Nov. 28.

To the Minister of War.

The following is a copy of the *cartel* delivered to the garrison of Bilbao:—

TO THE SUPERIOR CHIEF OF THE ENEMY'S
TROOPS IN BILBAO.

An honourable capitulation made in time, may save the town and garrison from a frightful catastrophe. Incendiarism, pillage, and all the horrors to which a town taken by assault is liable, are the evils which I foresee, and which I am desirous of avoiding. At a later period it will not be in my power. If you, who up to the present moment have loyally fulfilled your duties, should exceed all the limits of prudence by a prolonged resistance, you will compel me to take the place by storm, as I did the convent of San Agustin.

Count de CASA EGUIA.

GENERAL SARASA'S REPORT OF THE SORTIE
TOWARDS THE PUENTE NUEVO.

EXCELLENT SIR,—At two o'clock this morning, two companies of the enemy made a sortie from fort el Morro; one took the direction of Bazarrate, near Begoña, where one of our advanced pickets was stationed, and the other, reinforced by the detachment which occupies the fortified house del Verdel, advanced towards the bridge of Bolueta, the object of both being to get possession of these two points, and thus cut off our communication by the high road. The company which attempted the attack on Bazarrate was soon compelled to retreat, notwithstanding the numerical inferiority of our troops; the other party persisting in the attempt to take the post of Bolueta, it was reinforced by a company from another post, and they ultimately compelled the enemy to retreat, although the latter were protected by a tremendous fire from their forts, and by musketry, granades, &c.

The fire lasted until nearly two o'clock, P. M. Our only loss is one man wounded; that of the enemy must be severe, for we saw them carry away many of the wounded.

God protect your Excellency.

JUAN MANUEL SARASA.

Head-quarters San Domingo, Dec. 2.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL VILLARREAL'S REPORT OF THE VICTORY
OF ASUA.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The enemy not appearing to notice our numerous provocations and offers of battle, I concluded that this indifference arose from their being well secured in strong positions, and I resolved to make a reconnoissance, in order to see whether it was not possible to dislodge them. My intentions were approved of by his Excellency Count de Casa Eguia.

At break of day six companies of the 8th battalion, and four of the 6th of Biscay, stationed at Umbe, made a flank movement towards the village Luchoa, to the left of the enemy. I, with my staff, and the 3rd and 10th battalions of Navarre, commanded by General José Antonio Goñi, advanced on the centre, followed by the companies of Arragonese, the first provincial battalion, the 2d Guipuscoans, and the Algerines. The other corps remained on the lines ready to co-operate in case of need.

At eight o'clock, A. M., the first companies opened the fire; that of the guerillas then became general, protected by our artillery. So bravely did these troops conduct themselves, that the enemy was soon forced to abandon Luchoa. At the same

time, General Goñi advanced by the bridge of Asua, and, notwithstanding a strong resistance, at mid-day I was master of Luchoa, Erandio, Asua, Sondica, and Lexona. By our manœuvres, we also obliged the enemy to change the front of his line, and to retreat on the heights of Ondis.

I now drew up my men on the plain, and, to recommence the action, I sent out guerillas from the different corps. The enemy had previously got possession of a house situated on the slope of the mountain, where he had placed a detachment. From this house, guerillas were sent out; and from its proximity to our lines, we were greatly inconvenienced. In order to drive the enemy from this place, I ordered Captain Don Manuel Crespi to charge with fifteen lancers, belonging to the escort of his Excellency General Eguia, then at my side. This charge, executed with great intrepidity, threw the guerillas into disorder. The enemy, however, desirous of making a last effort, caused their cavalry to advance, thinking it would do wonders against our forces on the plain. The charge was made in full gallop on our infantry, but was received with the greatest coolness, and discharges of musketry. The enemy's cavalry, at length was obliged to retreat in disorder, leaving many horses and men on the field of battle. No second charge was made.

The firing continued until dusk. I then ordered my soldiers to be cantoned in the villages I had got possession of, leaving the enemy on the mountains.

The garrison of Bilbao seeing our troops engaged, made a sortie with considerable force to the side of Begoña; but his Excellency General Sarasa having taken the necessary measures, they were soon repulsed with loss by Brigadier Don Prudencio Sopelana, at the head of some companies of the Guides of Alava, the 3d Provisional battalion of Castile, and the first battalion of Alava.

Our loss is insignificant—that of the enemy considerable; for they left many of their dead and horses on the field of action. We made forty prisoners.

The enemy, unfortunately, burnt and pillaged several houses during the battle.

God protect your Excellency.

BRUNO DE VILLARREAL.

Head-quarters, Erandio, Dec. 5.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL SARASA'S REPORT OF THE SORTIE
FROM BILBAO, THE 5TH DEC.

EXCELLENT SIR,—The garrison of Bilbao, hearing the firing of the engagement, were desirous of ascertaining whether our line was well secured. For this purpose, at 11 o'clock A. M., 600 men made a sortie, advancing on the Rotura, a point situated near the church of Begoña, and where one of our advanced posts was stationed. At the approach of the enemy this post was obliged to retreat on the reserve. The enemy then sent out their guerillas in the direction of the high road, to the side of Ornetá. The fire was commenced by the 3rd Provincial battalion then at the advanced posts; this battalion was soon reinforced by several other companies. The enemy's guerillas advanced on the companies which I had stationed in the houses of Ornetá and Cherdinaga, and which received orders to remain firm; but a half company stationed in the houses called Panaderías, in Begoña, and at Bazarrate, were obliged to give way to superior numbers, and retire.

Things were in this state, and the combat sustained with vigour, when the 1st battalion of Alava entered the field of action. I caused it to form in column at the Hermitage. I now perceived that the enemy were about to set fire to the Panaderías, and

two houses close to it. I caused the two companies of the guides of Alava, which I had in reserve, to advance, and to charge by the right flank. This movement was executed with promptness. The enemy at the moment received from the town a reinforcement of 1400 men, divided into two columns. The strongest placed itself in the Circo, and the other near to the church of Begoña, from whence it could assist the 600 men. That in the Circo acted as a reserve. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the enemy, they could not gain an inch of ground from our brave fellows, their only success being the burning of six houses near to the city, including the Panaderias.

At six o'clock p. m., the enemy were retreating in disorder, pursued as far as the Rotura, although protected by a heavy fire from the church of Begoña, and the artillery of the forts.

The loss of the enemy must be serious, they having carried away with them a great many dead and wounded; ours is trifling. I will send your Excellency full details, as well as the names of those who most distinguished themselves.

God protect your Excellency.

JUAN MANUEL SARASA.

Head-quarters, San Domingo, over Bilbao,

Dec. 5, 1836, seven o'clock.

To the Minister of War.

GENERAL VILLARREAL'S REPORT OF THE BATTLE
OF LUCHANA, 25TH DECEMBER, 1836.

EXCELLENT SIR,—Yesterday (the 24th) was the day fixed upon for the attack against the enemy's position. Before day-break our troops began to march; but very soon a tremendous storm accompanied by a heavy fall of snow forced them to halt. Nevertheless, the enemy's guerillas, who considerably harassed our right flank, had been previously repulsed. The enemy now pointed his artillery upon the bridge of Luchana; our batteries replied; but towards four o'clock the fog had become so thick that the firing on both sides ceased. The enemy, however, profited by that suspension of arms and caused all their vessels to ascend the river, as far as the arch of the bridge of Luchana. The crews of the trincaduras seized the first battery, but not until after a frightful carnage of their comrades had been made, over whose dead bodies heaped up, they effected their entrance; but at the same moment I reinforced the position by three battalions of Alava. Words are wanting to represent all the subsequent horrors of that lamentable night. The firing of the musketry and bombs carried destruction in every direction. At three dif-

ferent intervals the enemy reached the heights of Cabras and Arreagas, but were repulsed by our brave soldiers at the point of the bayonet, leaving with us several prisoners and muskets.

The light from the snow on this sanguinary night, showed the combat in all its horrors,—the earth covered with mutilated bodies and blood ! Some idea may be formed of the carnage, when I inform your Excellency that it lasted fourteen hours, and that the ground was disputed inch by inch.

The continuance of the tempest compelled us to cease firing, and we retreated in good order ; several pieces of artillery and our positions remain in the possession of the enemy.

God protect your Excellency.

BRUNO DE VILLARREAL.

Head-quarters, Galdacana, Dec. 25, 1836.

To the Universal Minister.

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FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

EXCELLENT SIR,—I will arrange with as little delay as possible, all the details of the affair of the 24th, and of the succeeding night, and forward them to your Excellency. The loss sustained by the army under my command shall be estimated

with the utmost exactness. Your Excellency will see that it has not been very considerable; that of the enemy was enormous. They mounted to our positions over the dead bodies of their companions, and three times overthrown at the point of the bayonet by our gallant soldiers, they were precipitated from the top of the hill. Four times our troops were charged by the enemy, and four times did we repulse them; and if our adversaries succeeded by means of numbers trebling our own, in forcing our positions, that success cost them dear.

God preserve you.

BRUNO DE VILLARREAL.

Head-quarters, Galdacano, December 26, 1836.

To the Universal Minister.

In June 1837, the Carlist forces were estimated as follows :—

In the Basque Provinces and Navarre, under Guibelalde and Uranga—not including armed peasants	35,000
Under Don Carlos, gone to Catalonia	12,000
In Catalonia, well armed, under various leaders, and organized, 23 Battalions—say	20,000
In Valencia, under Cabrera, Serrador, and others	16,000
In Lower Arragon, chiefly with the expedition.....	10,000
In various parts of the kingdom, in small bands	6,000
	<hr/>
	99,000

(D.)

The following amusing illustration of liberal legislation in mercantile matters, is extracted from the correspondence of the *Morning Chronicle*, dated Bilbao, Jan. 15.

“The Junta of the Armament and Defence of Biscay, which has rendered such distinguished, such invaluable service during the late sanguinary struggle, has just issued a proclamation, informing the public that the General-in-chief has in virtue of the full powers with which he is invested, acceded to the request of the Junta to repeal the edict issued by General Cordova, in December 1835, prohibiting any articles of merchandise to be sent out of Bilbao. This blockade system has been most prejudicial to the commercial interests of the city, without having in the slightest degree crippled the Carlists, who, as is notorious, receive every species of supply by the French frontier. * *

“By the raising of the commercial blockade, which is accorded by decree of the General-in-chief, dated the 4th instant, all articles of legal mercantile traffic are permitted to be exported from Bilbao by land and water, *with the exception of the following* :—

“Every species of arms, munitions, military clothing, insignia, equipments and warlike stores—pitch, shoes, either men’s or women’s; hemp, copper, in whatever form; hides, tin and tin plates, tow, brass, lead, and resin. For the moment also and until the place shall become better supplied, the Junta prohibits the exportation of flour of every description, grain of all kinds, rice, beans, peas, salt, country wine, brandy and oil.”

Such is the free-trade accorded by the government of Isabella II. !!!

The following document also appeared at the same time in the columns of *The Morning Chronicle*.

PROCLAMATION OF THE CHRISTINO JUNTA OF
BISCAY.

The Provincial Deputation and Junta of Armament and Defence of Biscay would be wanting in those duties which gratitude and justice render incumbent on them, if they omitted to give a public

and solemn testimony of their sentiments towards those who have contributed by their efforts to save Bilbao from a frightful catastrophe. The gallant garrison of this town, and its meritorious national militia of all classes, have given in presence of these authorities such repeated and solemn proofs of long-suffering, valour, and heroism; the civil and military authorities have displayed so much good-will, activity, and intrepidity, that it is impossible either to appreciate sufficiently the high value of their virtues, or to refuse them the tribute of admiration and eulogium to which they have entitled themselves. But what fruit would the sacrifices, the sufferings, the indomitable courage, the blood so copiously shed have produced, if the armies of the north, and of the reserve, guided by their gallant and intrepid chief, his Excellency Don Baldomero Espartero; if the Spanish and English vessels; if the generous seamen of those nations had not rushed into difficulties and dangers to liberate this town? Neither deep rivers, nor almost inaccessible mountains crowned with formidable batteries, supported by the most celebrated champions of usurpation and despotism, nor the darkness of the night, and an unheard-of tempest of snow and hail, could restrain the impetuous ardour of the soldiers of liberty, who, conquering

almost insuperable obstacles, their brows crowned with well-merited laurel, came to embrace their companions and to admire the prodigies of an equal importance which had been performed by the defenders of all classes of this heroic town, whose walls and edifices proclaim with sublime eloquence the high deeds of which they had been witnesses.

It is doubtless gratifying to bestow just praises on all, and the Deputation and Junta fulfil this most pleasing obligation with a pure and inexpressible delight. Receive then, the homage of their sincere gratitude, of their admiration,—all who have either directly or indirectly, concurred in saving this immortal town; and who have rendered so signal and immense a service to the cause of their country.

(Signatures)

Santos San Miguel, President; Miguel de la Fuente; Vicente de Ansotegui; José Pedro de Echevarria; Antonio de Irigoyen; Romualda de Arellano; Manuel Maria de Guendica; José Maria de Uria Nafarrondo; Santiago Maria de Ingunza; José Blas de Araña; Tomas J. de Epalza; Tiburcio Maria de Recacoechea; José de Busturia; Antonio de Araña; José Pantaleon de Aguirre; José

Antonio de Ibarre; Antonio Cirilo de Vildósola; Francisco de Gaminde; Gabriel Maria de Orbegozo; Melquiades de Echávarri; J. S. de Lequerica; Por Acuerdo de S. E. la Diputacion Provincial y Junta de Armamento y Defensa de Vizcaya; Manuel de Barandino, Secretario Interino.

Bilbao, Jan. 1, 1837.

THE END.

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